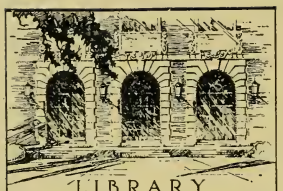

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VOL. III.

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THE

MILITIA MAJOR:

OR THE

SOCIAL SYSTEM IN TIPPERARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMISSION; AND A CASE FOR IT.

THE next morning was a busy one in the good old town of Clonmel. It was the opening of the Commission. The judges proceeded to the Court House in state carriages, escorted by a troop of cavalry, who beat back, with the flat of their sabres, the populace that thronged, in dense masses, the principal streets; the High Sheriff pre-

ceded the *cortège*, with the wand of office in his hand, his equipage, outvying the judges, drawn by four noble horses; and the *Sheriff's men*, as they were generally called, dressed in gorgeous liveries for the occasion, walked immediately in front of the procession, three deep, with a white halbert in the hand of each, while the foremost man of this pedestrian party differed from the rest, somewhat, in costume; his was the dress of a bugleman of some yeomanry corps, and his office seemed also to be such, for he sounded a *réveillé*, that announced the party, of which he formed the head, while the rear was brought up by the law officers of the crown in hack-carriages; the private ones of the grand jury and principal gentry of the county, closing a spectacle got up for the moral improvement, and special edification of the Rockites of Tipperary. A company of Infantry, and a large body of police guarded the different approaches to the court where justice

was to be dispensed after so imposing a form; and where access was all but impossible, unless to parties immediately connected with what was going on; or the gentry of the county, and those amongst the people for whom they answered as the civil and military guardians of the place. Lawyers with briefs and without them, past unquestioned. Attorneys and attorney's clerks, with dark blue stuff bags, filled to suffocation, pressed onward unmolested. Squires and Squireens, elbowed their way without hindrance; but the frieze coated man was pushed back at the point of the bayonet, and found his only *sesame* the protection of some better dressed, though perhaps not better man, to this Hall of Justice. There was one official man absent on this occasion: it was the Sub-Sheriff of the county. He had sacrificed to the will of his superior, his own and the public's pleasure, by leaving the town at a late hour the previous night, under an escort of dragoons, in company

with Major Power. That gentleman's absence had been much regretted and commented on by his fellow magistrates; but being away at such a time, was unanimously agreed must be occasioned by some very pressing and important matter, for he was one of those always to be found amongst the busy idle—on similar occasions. They had travelled during the hours of darkness, and stopped for refreshment at a small town, about five miles from Ballyvoyle. The *Sub* was not at all in good humour—he was taken away much against his own will, at a time that he could badly spare, from a great press of business consequent on the commission; and he was called on to perform, what at any time was to him the most irksome duty of his situation. He now eat but little breakfast, while his companion swallowed his with a *gusto* that evinced his appetite no way impaired by the work in hand indeed it was one on which his heart had been set for some time, and he had done

his inclination violence in postponing it even for a short period, until the present opportunity ; but the gratification of his own vanity, and the earnest desire to figure before the public, as a magistrate of extraordinary activity, produced this delay, and caused him to fix on the first day of the commission, as the most fit and proper one for the ejection of his tenantry, from the lands of Knockanure. He was not insensible either to the *eclat* attending such a step, if managed properly ; and Major Power, above all things, prided himself upon good management in every department ; under ordinary circumstances, turning out a whole townland, merely to gratify the whim of a proprietor, would be considered, even at the period we write of, arbitrary, to say the least, though the axiom, "that property had duties as well as rights," had never then been propounded ; and the fixed maxim of the day counselled every man to do what he liked with his own. Still such a proceeding would be open to cavil ;

but if he could obtain the sanction of an assembled county on the act, he might defy any individual censure ; and to secure this was no way difficult. They had met together for the avowed purpose of extinguishing the insurrectionary spirit of the people, and if this wily landlord could represent his tenants as belonging to that class, he rose, in the estimation of his own order, rather than lost *caste*, by depriving of a home about twenty families, whose only crime was their being born the serfs of such a man who could turn the prejudices and errors of his day, as he did all other things, to accomplish his own private ends ; with the same casuistry he silenced his conscience to the flagrant perjury of Barney, and other flagitious acts of his mispent life. He now reconciled the intended slander on his unoffending tenantry, by devoutly hoping the *Ukase* Act, he was about perpetrating, would turn them into what he represented them a lawless horde of Rockites utterly unworthy of

countenance and protection. With feelings such as these, both gentlemen resumed their journey. The chaise they travelled in was followed by two jingles, or hack-outside jaunting-cars, heavily laden with bailiffs; and Sergeant Wetherell, this stage of his journey, resigned his seat on the box, beside the driver of the vehicle, occupied by his master and the sheriff, to join more congenial spirits amongst the party in the rear. They had proceeded in this order for some miles, the Major keeping a sharp look-out at either window of the carriage, and his companion dosing, or appearing to do so, inwardly devoting the promoter of the enterprise to a fate far worse than awaited his tenantry; and wondering by what legerdemain he could have prevailed on the high sheriff to lend his countenance and assistance to a business of the kind, at so inopportune a time. Long before they arrived within view of the ejected farms, crowds of country people attracted their attention. Ploughs were

deserted, and the seed sowers that followed them laid down their baskets of grain to add another witness to the distressing scene about to be enacted. The late potatoe digging was going on ; but diggers and pickers equally deserted their work to join the crowd of idle, eager, beings, that thronged the main road that led to Knockanure ; nor were the neighbouring hills empty ; videttes were placed on the most commanding heights, and long before the landlord's carriage came within sight or hearing of his rejected tenantry, they were aware of his approach ; and the groans of execration with which the announcement was hailed, shewed how deeply the people sympathised with the objects of his arbitrary oppression. A company of infantry, and a party of police joined the Sheriff's cavalcade about a mile before they reached the ground ; and the Major's joy at this reinforcement was not to be silenced by his companion's taciturnity.

" I think, Mr. Sheriff," he said, with the

glee of a mischievous school-boy, who had gathered around him combustibles enough to injure and annoy his neighbours, "that we're more than a match for the crowd of ragamuffins I see pouring in from every side. Those fellows," he added, pointing to the military, who now advanced in line, "would soon disperse them for us, without having the trouble of firing a second volley —one would be sufficient to send them flying in all directions."

"I hope there will be no occasion for their firing at all," replied the Sheriff, coolly.

"Oh! of course, I hope not," returned his companion; "but we are now on the ground, and we cannot be too cautious, for we have a desperate set of villains to deal with, and as a military man, and one that can boast of a little experience in those matters," he added, with an air of command that would be highly becoming in a veteran Peninsula man, "I would suggest the propriety of the men being formed into square, to resist any sudden attack, and the order to prime and load,

but not with blank cartridge, given before we get out of the carriage."

"There is an officer already in command," said the Sheriff, drily, "of course he will place his men to the best advantage —I am not answerable for his tactics; my business is to put you in possession of the land, not drill an army for a pitched battle."

"There will be one, then, sir, before you accomplish your mission," said the Major, as he now met the enraged looks of the people, who thronged round the carriage, "unless my advice is taken; and unfortunately there is but a small party of police here, on account of the numbers attending the Commission; over them I have some influence; but the commanding officer of the military here is a perfect Jack Pudding, and unless I take the command of the affair into my own hands we shall be hemmed in and surrounded before we know what we are about."

"It would have been much better I should

think," remarked his companion, gravely. "to have communicated this piece of information before we left Clonmel—I was not prepared for anything like the resistance you seem to apprehend."

"Then you must have attended very little to my report of the matter," returned the Major, quickly, "for I think you were present when I laid before the High Sheriff a full statement of all the malicious injuries I have received from the parties about to be ejected, as well as the threatening notices served on me since the first law proceeding was taken against them."

The *sub* was silenced; for he remembered quite well being present during this recital of grievances by the Major, which at the time he set down as a piece of *extravaganza* on his part, in order to obtain the High Sheriff's co-operation in the matter; he now looked to his pistols, and enquired how far the next military station was from where they now were.

"Over seven miles," returned his com-

panion, pettishly, "until the last week a *depot* was stationed in my own demesne I may say, at the next village not more than half a mile off; but some booby amongst their officers chose to take umbrage at a trick played on him at a race by an ignorant servant man of my sister-in-law's, and the whole corps took huff about it—got up a memorial against their quarters; and their commanding officer marched them off under the plea that the accommodation at Ballyvoyle was not suitable indeed for a winter quarter."

"I wish he had not discovered that until your tenants were ejected," returned the Sheriff, "however, here we are, and we must show the best fight we can. I think you mentioned something of the houses being levelled, perhaps it would be better to try and get a peaceable possession, and make some compromise with the men, by letting them and their families back again after going through the law forms."

"This might suit you, Mr. Sheriff," re-

turned the Major, "but I might go look for my possession afterwards. Oh, no, when I have them out, I'll take good care they can never come back. You surely can't be afraid of a mob such as this, with a company of Infantry at your back, a sergeant's guard of police, and a troop of bailiffs armed with pickaxes and crow-bars?"

"I am not afraid, Major Power," returned the Sheriff, emphatically; opening the door of the chaise, then, muttering as he got out, in a lower key—"Before we leave the ground we shall see who *is!*" joined his own peculiar *garde du corps*, who now drew up awaiting their chief's further orders; prepared to do battle as the Major described, though ostensibly equipped to level the mansions of the ejected tenantry.

We are afraid the word mansion would convey to our readers, a very erroneous idea of the cabins about to be pulled down; yet most of them were of a better class than many of the wretched hovels in the surrounding neighbourhood;

for they were built before Major Power's dynasty, and in that good old time when ground was not of sufficient value to prevent their original founders from allowing space enough in the construction of their dwellings. Most of their out-offices were in a state of dilapidation and decay, for their landlord never allowed for repairs or improvement; and, as times grew worse with the tenants and their stock diminished, those buildings fell, by degrees, into disuetude; until, by this time, their ruined gables presented a striking feature of neglect and poverty, at either side of the large, but half enclosed, yard in front of their dwelling house. Most of the latter on the townland, in despite of this drawback, to that air of general comfort so seldom, we regret to say, a distinguishing characteristic of an Irish cottier's home, yet wore the appearance of snug, comfortable cabins, built after a better order of architecture than many of their class. There was the porch sheltering the door, the heavy coat

of thatch, with the green house-leek flourishing unmolested for years; its turretted blossoms giving a gothic character to the roof it sprung from; the white-washed wall the ivied gable, the much worn stile beside it, leading to the small sheltered garden behind, with its osier bower and hedge of white-thorn, intermingled here and there with giant elder-bushes, the odour of whose flowers, in summer evenings, the poor love to indulge in, though nought, it is said, grows beneath its shadow yet, by some strange superstition, it has been invested with the term "blessed;" an amulet from witchcraft or faerie, a charm equally against unearthly spell or worldly evil; sought out and prized by the vulgar, is this fragrant plant, tree in all but name, forbidden and banished the well-cared for *parterre* or choice shrubbery of a higher class. At Knockanure it might be said to flourish. The tree immediately overshadowing the first house approached by the Sheriff's party, for the purpose of destruction, was,

seemingly, the parent stem from which sprung the wide extended progeny that, like the *lares* of the ancients, protected, as well as sheltered every dwelling in the townland. In summer, its cooling shade was refreshing even to look at, and the rude stone bench underneath, covered with verdant moss, was sought out in the noon-tide heat, by many a loiterer, in the idle, vacant hour succeeding a mid-day dinner; now its leafless boughs, swayed by the wintry blast, sighed as if giving its last moan, to those summer hours of innocent enjoyment—of mutual confidence—of cheerful intercourse—never more, alas! to return; its gnarled branches bowed before the cold north wind, stripping them mercilessly, as it passed, of every vestige of a warmer season; leaving them to grieve if aught inanimate ever grieves "o'er the houseless fortunes of those, its bright, fragrant foliage so oft had shaded—its root was coeval with the house from the side wall of which it sprung, and now, the fantastic look-

ing old tree rocked to and fro by the winter breeze sang, as if its own requiem, and that of the house it sheltered; whilst he, who had lived man and boy beneath its shadow, leaned, with folded arms, on the half-shut gate, leading into the yard in front, and with his back turned to the approaching party, silently contemplated that old elder tree ; what Mike Bourke's feelings were on this occasion, we are not going to describe—perhaps he regarded the old elder tree as sympathising, by its unquiet rest and denuded foliage, in the broken fortunes of himself and family ; there was an intelligible language to him, perhaps, in the loud wail of the wind, as it caused its withered branches to groan with more than mortal agony; or he looked, perhaps, his last farewell on that old familiar tree, as on the guardian spirit of his race, whose mysterious weird had run, now about to be uprooted with the homestead of his fathers—all this and more he might have felt at that moment ; but he met the

deputy chief magistrate of the county, backed with the *posse commitaties*, and preceded by his own former landlord, with a look of sullen apathy that might have been worn by the most indifferent stranger, a chance spectator of the scene; so unmoved was the man's whole appearance, that it was with some difficulty Major Power could persuade the Sheriff that it was from 'that listless lounger on the half broken gate" that he was to demand possession, which he, at length, did, midst a yell of hisses from the vast multitude, behind, of men, women, and children; only kept back by the bayonets of the soldiery, who formed a bristled *cheveaux de frise* of naked steel in the rear of the Sheriff and his party.

"Go in and take it," was the dogged answer of the man; whilst the groans and hisses of the mob increased a hundredfold.

"What a Major he is, *avoryah*," cried a woman in the crowd; while every voice

was hushed, for the moment, to let hers be heard. "What a soger he is, in me eye; 'tis aisily known he was only a feather-bed wan, or he wouldn't be afeerd to come an' ax possission be himsilf o' the quietest man in the whole barony; an' not bring the Sheriff an' his bloodhounds a top o' the dacent, civil man, that never as much as riz an angry word to friend or fellah, since he was the height ov a sod ov turf. Oh, wisha, Mike Bourke, *avich*, 'twould be more in ye'er way now, if ye stood by the *factions*, an' not set ye'er face so black aginst the night walkin'; then, *mavrone*, ye wouldn't see the day ye'er ould faather id be turned out o' the hob, widout sthrikin' a blow to prevint it."

"Whist there, I say," cried the man, sternly. "I lived in peace all my life, an' I'll die in id. Come, sir," he added, addressing the Sheriff. "I'll go in wid ye, for there's some inside that arn't ov the same mind."

At a signal from Major Power, the

bailiffs rushed into the house, followed by that gentleman, and the Sheriff. A middle-aged woman, with a face of distraction, stood beside the large-armed wicker chair, in which sat a venerable-looking old man, seemingly advanced to the extreme verge of longevity; she was endeavouring to persuade him that the sun shone brightly —that the hawthorn was in blossom—and that Jemmy and Pat were waiting to carry him and his easy chair out to the garden, "to see the bees workin' the crathurs the long summer day."

The old man seemed to comprehend her meaning; but shook his palsied head discouragingly.

"Oh no *avourneen*," he muttered in a low broken voice, "the bees ain't at work to-day." His former frugal habits surviving the wreck of his mental faculties, and enabling him to understand this part of her entreaty. "They keep in the hive when the ould man is sittin be the fire-side; the plough is goin' thin for me, wid the good

industhrous boy, to make rint for the masther, God bless him.—Up *jee wou*," he cried in a gleeful voice, his wavering intellects recurring to what he supposed his son's occupation at the time.

"It's no use mother," cried a stout, able looking young man, with his back resting against the dresser. "The sogers an' the Sheriff are comin in to turn us all out; an' it's time lost to thry an' intice my poor owld grandfaather out ov the ash corner by fair manes; he must put up wid the hardship an' the ill usage as well as the youngest ov us now."

"More fools we," cried his brother Pat, seated on a corner of the settle, his arms resting on his knees, and his head drooped so low as to conceal a handsome young face, convulsed with suppressed passion."

"Oh Jemmy an' Pat," cried their mother, her maternal fears aroused by the determined tone of her younger son, "don't brake out now, for the love ov the blessed Vargin, afther ye'er being said an' led be

ye'er broken-hearted faather up to this; don't *asthores*, it's naither a sin nor a shame to be poor, glory be to God; an' whin we're put out on the road, praise be to His name, they can't throw worse than that in our face. Here boys, help a hand," she cried, " an' take the poor ould man out, before the furnithur is disturbed afore his eyes, 'twould make him die the harder, if he saw everything at sixes and sevens, let his sowl depart in pace anny way, whativer cross is afore the rest ov us."

The two young men advanced at their mother's bidding, for it was apparent that hitherto they had been subject to parental control; but it was with no heartiness of good will, they now lifted the chair of their aged grandfather to obey her command; either countenance swelled with indignation, as they listened to his feeble querulous, complaint ov bein' dragged about sich a cold day, be his own *garsoons*," Whilst his daughter-in-law, with woman's thought, wrapped her husband's

warm frieze coat round the trembling limbs of the decayed old man; her sons scarcely brooked the delay, their eyes flashing with restrained but not subdued fury, at the callous countenance of their inhuman landlord, as they bore their aged relative for ever from the house he had just entered.

Mike Bourke stood sullenly by, whilst the bailiffs pursued the clearance system; after the most expeditious manner; every article within the premises was pitched out by them, on the dunghill outside, with a celerity as well as violence that the woman o' the house, in her housewife care, for those articles would fain have prevented; but her husband sternly forbade her, and Mike Bourke's word had ever been a law in his household; he came of a race proverbial, on the townland, for honest industrious habits—a peaceable demeanour that had descended from father to son for generations; and Mike was not behind his ancestors, in these good qualities; he was hard and honest amongst his neighbours, paid

his rent punctually, brought up his two sons in the habits of his race, and eschewed bad company, night walking, and faction fights for either them or himself. A good son and kind husband, but *dark* withal; and this latter quality of his, created a certain degree of fear in the minds of his wife and children, that, along with the respect and affection with which he was, by them regarded, gave him uncontrolled influence at his own fire-side. It was this wholesome dread that prevented his sons shewing any open opposition to Major Power's will; for their father, from the first, avowed his determination of submitting to it, whenever force was resorted to.

"I will hould by my own as long as I can, in pace," was his constant remark to his family; "but it never shall be said a blow was sthruck to keep Mike Bourke in his farm; no, nor that his sons demaned thimselves, by night walking, or bad company; betther for us take the road, an' beg dacently at wance, than be behouldin'

to sich as them ; to keep a roof over our heads, whinever he comes in it, boys, wid the sheriff, as they say he will, daare to to rise an angry finger against him, an I'll lay ye wid me own hand, stiff at his feet."

His sons had obeyed these parental orders to the letter, but from that hour they were mentally free of their father's control ; with the fierce passions of youth struggling in the countenance of either, uprooting in their devastating course the moral rectitude of years, they stood beside their grandfather's chair, under the old elder tree, the very impersonation of revolutionised minds, lashed into fury by heartless oppression. The vengeful cries of the mob came as music to their ears, and naught restrained them joining, heart and hand, with the most infuriated amongst them, save the desertion of the helpless, pitiable looking being beside them, who, with the clamorous importunity of years,

besought "his own *garsoons* not to lave him to die in the hands ov the red coats."

The house was emptying fast. Sergeant Wetherell, with two volunteers from the police force, who saw in perspective certain stripes decorating their arms, made use of the old elder tree as a sort of step ladder, to assist them in gaining a sure footing on the thatch, that was now torn away, with relentless hands, by this party, whilst the bailiffs, inside, dragged the doors from off their hinges ; and broke in pieces the small sashes of the windows with their crow-bars. The work of destruction went merrily on ; the mob shouted execrations and threats at the landlord ; and flung at random biting jests at the military and police, but no violent interference was attempted ; why should they, when Mike Bourke himself stood by with folded arms, midst the ruin of all he possessed on earth, listening with unmoved countenance to the taunting witticisms of his landlord.

"For the last month we heard of nothing but what the Knockanure tenantry wouldn't do," cried the Major, exultingly, as he encouraged his sappers and miners to their hateful work, "they'd sell their lives to the last man, forsooth, before they'd give up their farms; but Mr. Bourke, here, now thinks it better to give a peaceable possession; of course he's not at all afraid of the military, with so many of the good boys at his back, shouting outside there to give him courage for a stand-up fight."

Here the sheriff interfered, and Mike Bourke looked in his landlord's face, but said nothing. The ceremony of extinguishing the fire was then gone through; and after a formal possession was tendered by the Sheriff to the landlord, Mike Bourke and his wife were ordered by the latter—"To go and look after their furniture, or he'd have to pull the house down over their heads, so the sooner they took themselves and their trash off the premises the better."

He, who had once been called *master*, in every sense of the word, of the now dilapidated wreck of his former comfortable dwelling, silently obeyed the rude mandate to quit, for ever, the sheeling of his youth, the home of his manhood and middle age, now a heap of ruins, by the mere will of that landlord—to labour and toil in whose service had been the grand object of his life, from boyhood, as well as that of his forefathers—"to make the rent," was, at once their pride and pleasure. Crops might fail; adverse years might come; but the landlord was to be no sufferer; hardship and privation might visit the cabin of Mike Bourke, but Mike himself was never absent on the gale-day; the year of scarcity, as well as the year of plenty, saw him, at these stated periods, dressed in his Sunday clothes, standing at the door of Major Power's office, at Drumgar, his right hand plunged deep into his breeches' pocket, as if to protect the hoarded savings that there lay *caché*—to be consigned, the

next moment, to the custody of his landlord—without one sigh of regret for the denial of almost every earthly comfort, the endurance of unremitting toil, to accomplish this *desideratum* of his existence—"to pay—come what will—the masther the rint to the day." And was he, who had never infringed on a landlord's rights, who had risen early, and late taken rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, to minister to them to the letter, now to be unhoused, unsheltered, and ruined, by the very man, he and his had so faithfully served. The tottering roof above him, the wreck of all around him, needed no comment from his landlord to bring this truth home to Mike Bourke's heart—it pressed heavily on his wounded spirit ; but no word or tear came as he prepared to obey the last command of his cruel master. The stifled anguish of his wife, seemed by him, at that moment, unregarded ; her choking sobs unheard; as she rushed forth, with wringing hands, from the threshold she had first crossed, in

the morning of her youth, as a blooming, happy bride; he who had been then her conductor now followed slowly in her steps, but paused for a moment in the dilapidated doorway, ere he quitted that threshold for ever! A spasm of agony flitted across the hard, stern features of the man; but it was only for an instant. There was no falter in either eye or hand as he removed the cross of reed straw attached to the rafter immediately above where he stood; placed there by the founder of the cabin, and never to be removed while it could boast a roof tree. This memento of his ancestor's piety, and symbol of his own faith, was all Mike Bourke attempted to save of his worldly chattels, and he now grasped firmly this relic of his former fortunes, as, with a firm step and unmoved brow, he passed for ever from the dismantled ruins that had once been a home.

His landlord and the officials in attendance quickly followed, and as they did so, the work of destruction was completed—the

roof fell in, the side wall gave way, the old elder tree, uprooted from its foundation, shrieked, as if its last wail, and then shared the fate of the house it once protected.

"Am I his tenant anny longer?" sternly demanded Mike Bourke of the Sheriff.

"No," returned that gentleman. "You have to look out for another landlord, now, beside Major Power; he has been put legally in possession of your farm."

The wretched man breathed hard; but this announcement, like the uplifted sluice gates of the torrent, gave vent to the pent up wrongs, that fealty, to his landlord, had hitherto restrained within his own breast.

"Then may God dale with him as he desarves," shouted Mike Bourke, in a voice of thunder. "In his hands I lave him," he added solemnly, falling on his knees, while the reed straw cross was firmly clasped between his uplifted hands, "an'

may he, before the year is out, dhrink deep ov the bitther cup he gave me an' mine a taste ov this day. May his hearth stone be as cowld an' as desolate as he made mine; an' may the plough-share pass, in other hands, over the house he lives in; may the curse ov the hard workin' industhrious, honest man, that he made a beggar ov for no cause in life, light on him late an' early; meet him in this world, an' follow him to the next; an' whin his black sowl axes for mercy at the gate ov Heaven, may the curse ov the broken heart shut the doore in his face."

Deep and loud was the "Amen" of the assembled multitude around, while a pin fall might have been heard amongst that excited crowd, during the recital of that fearful prayer.

Even the doting father of the vengeful suppliant seemed to comprehend its meaning, for the intellect that had wavered for years, his son's words and impressive gestures seemed to have restored with more

than former brightness; unearthly intelligence gleamed from his dark bright eyes, as they glanced from the ruined cabin to the prostrate form of his son, imprecating curses on the head of his relentless landlord. The old man's voice joined in the general amen, and then, his dying gaze rested on the face of Major Power, brightly flashing, as the expiring taper; at first, sternly upbraiding his former master; then, gradually fixing into the icy, cold, interrogating look of death.

The object of that look would fain have escaped it, but the spell of conscience was on him, and he could not, though he would have turned away—other passages in his life might be forgotten, but the *last look* of old Jemmy Bourke never was by his Landlord.

CHAPTER II.

FORCIBLE POSSESSION.

In the heat of action, Major Power, like many other heroes, sought to stifle any compunctious visitings raised within him, by the look we have just described, as well as shew his contempt for the *anathema* pronounced by his former tenant, and responded to so heartily by public opinion; a thing, by the by, the Major delighted to brave, when emanating from that despised class of his fellow-creatures the lower orders; and which he now boldly set at defiance, by marching the Sheriff

and his party of police and military direct for the house of Paddy Dooly. This was a bold step, for Paddy was looked on as the most popular man in the whole parish, but his landlord considered the "first stroke won half the battle," and that Paddy would not be likely to offer much resistance immediately after the peaceable ejection of Mike Bourke ; for this reason, he avoided turning out any of the poorer tenants, lest their opposition should compel the Sheriff to use violence, which he knew would have the effect of inciting Paddy to fight to the last. So, passing by several holdings, to be visited in turn, after Paddy's was restored to his landlord, that gentleman, with the Sheriff and his escort, as well as the yelling mob, took possession of the Bawn immediately in front of Paddy Dooly's dwelling.

It was a long, narrow, slated house. Its front, originally consisting of two small windows at one side of the door, while the other was left in a minority of one;

above these were placed, at irregular distances, four smaller windows, their form and situation no way designed for architectural effect; all these avenues of light, both above and below, were now built up with solid masonry, except the window immediately above the door, and from this, the sashes had been removed, and in lieu of their protection, large blocks of stone decorated the window sill, piled up so high as to prevent any person, standing inside, being distinctly visible to a party without. The front door was made fast, and the back one was built up in much the same fashion as the windows; altogether it presented a formidable aspect of security and resistance quite sufficient to warn the Sheriff that, however he might claim, there was but little prospect of obtaining a peaceable possession from Mr. Dooly; the attempt, however, was to be made, and 'midst a volley of hisses, distinctly heard at a considerable distance, he thundered at the front door for admittance.

The demand was responded to from within by a female voice, whose tones bespoke a power to command, far more than a will to submit.

"Who's there?" she demanded, in a Stentorian voice, from behind the masked battery of the window above, "or who sent ye here to hit the doore so hard, as if the house wor ye'er own; whoever they were, good man, they only led ye asthray—this is Paddy Dooly's of Knocknaure, not a *sheboen* shop to make bould on."

A shout of laughter from the mob drowned, for some moments, the voice of the Sheriff; after some time, however, like a bashful county member, the purport of whose speech is guessed at, but not heard by the gentlemen of the fourth estate in the gallery, he announced himself as the Sheriff of the county, and ordered the door to be opened forthwith, or else it would be broken in.

A scornful laugh from the same female voice was all the reply deigned to this

threat, and the Major now came to the rescue of the insulted civil authority, by loudly claiming his right of entrance into a house that was properly his own; setting forth with much pomposity of tone and manner his peculiar privileges as a landlord. This harangue was addressed immediately to the window from which the voice issued; but equally intended for the edification of all parties outside; by the mob it was quickly answered by the most deafening groans, while a vociferous shout was raised for the lady at the window, with a call "to come an' show herself, an' spake up to the Major." A row of the upper loose stones, with which the aperture was defended, was speedily removed, and the handsome round face of Mrs. Dooly appeared above—only the head was seen, and that displayed her most becoming cap set on to the greatest advantage; there was some excitement perhaps in the deep glow on her cheek, in the quick rapid glance of her eye; but none could be traced in the

good-humoured drollery which played round a naturally humorous-looking mouth.

"Who are you at all, at all?" she asked, in a voice of mock enquiry, fixing her distended eyes on the face of Major Power, who stood a few yards advanced immediately in front of the house. "To my knowledge, good man, I never seen ye afore, an' what brings ye here now?—I'm no witch that I could guess, except it is *baitin' the bush.* Go ye'er ways, *alanna,* an' when next ye go out with the *wren* boys, have the dacency to pass a lone woman's doore silent, an' civil at laist." The Major stamped with rage, roaring out, "he was the landlord," and Mrs. Dooly went on. "I'm not the *gom* ye take me for, *avich,*" she cried, "to b'lieve annything ov the sort; for though I never seen him in all my born days, still I often heard tell Major Power was a fine, portly man, with the colour ov the good livin' on him, not a poor, mane, *sprissawn* of ye'er sort, that's for all the world like a *Luprechaun.*"

This pointed allusion to the gentleman's *personel*, amused the mob exceedingly, while it nearly suffocated Captain Grant in a fit of suppressed laughter. The Major's passion was now at its fiercest, and he called on the Sheriff, by every law human and Divine, to order the military to fire without mercy on the house. The official hesitated, and Mrs. Dooly again addressed the infuriated man.

"Well, I knew, my boy, that you wor no landlord ov mine, with ye'er "ready, present, fire," at a dacent woman in a house by hersilf, *mavrone*, 'tisn't that way the landlord spakes to his tenants; 'tis, he's civil an' humble to the poorest among um; an' ov a hard time, never as much as looks for the winther half year; 'tis only to tell him their wants, an' he's the man to stand by um, an' keep the house over their heads, an' something warm to put in id afther."

Whether Major Power felt this ironical sketch of Mrs. Dooly's to be either a faithful or flattering likeness, deponent

sayeth not—but its effect was to cause him to snatch a sledge from the hands of a bailiff, with which he inflicted ample and summary vengeance on the door.

The bailiffs, at a command from the sheriff, hastened to his assistance; and well secured as this barrier to entrance was, it must have given way, had not the ponderous stones heaped on the window-sill above, come tumbling down, threatening in their descent, to crush to atoms the belligerent party at the door. A timely retreat was, however, hastily accomplished; but not before the most active of the bailiffs was put *hors de combat*, at least for that day, by a stunning blow on his pericranium. The Sheriff again loudly demanded admittance, and assured the party inside, if not immediately granted, the house should be fired on by the military; so that it was worse than madness in them to resist.

Mrs. Dooly now appeared, and as most of the stones had been flung off, her rotund and portly figure was distinctly visible.

"Go about ye'er business, good man, if

ye have anny," she cried, in seemingly high good humour, "an lave a dacent woman in pace in her own house; what do you take me for at all, to open my doore to such rampagin' vagrants as the likes ov ye; ketch me at it, indeed; no, not wan inch, if ye kept clammering there untle Doom's-day."

The Sheriff now consulted with Major Power, and their colloquy was cut short by a complaint from the sergeant of police, that some of his men were seriously hurt by a party of *tirralleurs* in the rear; who kept up a rifle practice at the *polismen*, with sharp paving-stones, flung with such admirable precision, as to take almost certain effect. This the Major urged on the Sheriff as an additional reason for proceeding at once to extreme measures; and that official gentleman, much puzzled and somewhat baffled, ordered the bailiffs again to force the door; the command this time was not obeyed with so much alacrity by that body, their former repulse damping

their courage somewhat, and it took both threats and promises from magistrate and Sheriff to induce them to commence the attack.

The police in the meantime, were marched out of *stone* range, and the Sheriff had given orders both to them and the military to fire over the house, should the stones from the window-sill be again hurled on the bailiffs at their work.

Mrs. Dooly, however, was not to be intimidated by this, for though a volley preceded the onslaught at the door, still the bailiffs were, as formerly, driven back by the huge blocks flung off the window sill. The mob by their cheers encouraged this resistance, and pressed hard upon the military attempting to surround them. A short winter day was wearing away fast, and much time had been already lost; something decisive Major Power insisted should be done, and the Sheriff hinted to him of a compromise, to save blood that must otherwise be shed; but the Major

valued his rights, as a landlord, too highly to consent to this.

"I demand, from you, sir, the possession," he cried impatiently, "you are not afraid, I suppose, to take it of that fat woman at the window."

The taunt had its effect; an immediate order to again force the door was given; the riot act was read, whilst the people clamorously pressed on the soldiery. Sergeant Wetherell drew his master aside, and whispered for a moment in his ear.

"That's the very thing Dan, and I thought of it before," cried the Major, joyfully, "but the Sheriff is so confoundedly squeamish; take a good aim, and put the lady from doing any more mischief; the soldiers then can keep back the mob, while the door will be forced in no time."

The bailiffs advanced *en masse* to the charge; this time they had nothing to apprehend from stones above, for the supply on the window-sill had been exhausted, the stout door was assaulted with both

might and main; Captain Grant and his soldiers had to retreat before the people, and the police called out to the sheriff for an order to prime and load.

Major Power, with the air of a Bedlamite, by turns, reproached and encouraged the bailiffs to burst in the door; and a few strokes more, had it been made of iron, instead of wood, must have accomplished his purpose.

"Mother ov Heaven save us," cried Mrs. Dooly, passionately, "it's all over with us now, they tould me to keep palavering with him until Jim Sullivan, and the Gurtnagarry boys came up, an' now I hear their faction cry on the Bawn, an' Paddy Dooly's doore is sledgin in before their eyes."

"Never fear misthress, *asthore*," cried Mary Devaan. "It's well I knew Jim Sullivan wouldn't desart you or yours, if the distance to Clonmell was twice as far, wance he got the hard word in id; an' now do ye hear him," she cried, "I'd know his

voice among a thousand ; they'll bate the *polis'* an' *sogers* afore the Sheriff is in yet."

"Mary, jewel, they can't," cried her mistress, distractedly. "Sheet iron wouldn't stand them blows, an' wance they get in, the heart 'ill break in two within me."

This conversation occurred on the staircase that led to the only upper story in the house. Mary Devaan had dived below without making any reply; in a moment she appeared again carrying a huge pot of boiling water.

"Clear the way, misthress *agrah*," she cried, triumphantly, "an' let us see what a poor girl can do for the hand that fed her ;" her light, elastic, but still firmly knit figure almost bounded up the staircase, heavily laden as it was; in a moment she stood at the open window ; balanced, with much skill, the scalding contents of the pot she carried, and the scream of the bailiffs, underneath, the next moment told that her aim was a correct one. With a glowing

cheek and flashing eye, the faithful creature poised the heavy metal pot, ready to dash it on the first who should return to so hateful a work, while a cheer that rent the skies resounded from the assembled multitude below. Among those thousand voices one was clearly distinct to the ear of that fair young girl, and never during their long years of courtship did she look half as beautiful in the eyes of Jim Sullivan as at the moment that was doomed to be her last—a shriek, and a bound forward, with an "Oh, God, I am shot!" and the suggestive hint of Sergeant Wetherell was carried out, the wish of his conscientious master gratified.

Much remains to be told of that fearful day; for the bullet that silenced for ever the truthful heart of Mary Devaan, like the first booming cannon on the battle field, was the signal for indiscriminate slaughter; her lifeless body dangled from the open window, part of her dress having caught in its framework; which prevented the corpse from being

precipitated to the ground; her long fair hair, in the momentary death struggle, burst the narrow band that confined it, and now floated wild and free, tossed to and fro by a winter breeze; giving a look of life and animation to the insensible form, of which, in the pride of her girlhood, it was once deemed the brightest ornament; now, those fair shining tresses were rudely seized on by the police in their eagerness to secure, as they hoped, a prisoner, and the breathless body dragged, by this means, to the ground. Ample retribution was at hand ; for the simultaneous cry of anguish that arose from the people, as that young, devoted girl fell, was succeeded by a shout of vengeance, so fierce and deadly in its purpose, as to quail the heart, and blanch the lip, of the stoutest and most disciplined man within its hearing.

The rush of an outraged mob, is at all times irresistible ; but led on by a desperate man such as the lover of Mary Devaan, escape from its vengeful fury, would indeed be

miraculous; the Sheriff saw his danger in time, and gave instant orders for retreat; Captain Grant and his men, with the cool bravery of British soldiers, made theirs with some degree of military precision, covering that of the Sheriff and Major Power, who with his man Dan and the bailiffs literally ran off the ground, the rear of the party firing at intervals over the heads of the mob, by the order of their officer, the civil authorities present, being utterly incapacitated, from what predominant feeling our readers may guess, from taking the command. When the Sheriff gave the order to retreat, the sergeant's guard of police, with tactics peculiar to the civil force in that day, stood their ground, and discharged a full volley at the mob. The distance that intervened between the two parties, was only the space the military had vacated in retreat, so that every bullet brought down its victim. The concentrated rage of the people was now to be wreaked on that luckless sergeant's guard,

and not one was left amongst its numbers to tell how their comrades fell. With their own carbines their brains were beaten out, but not before many of their bayonets were sheathed in the hearts of their maddened foes. It was indeed a scene of carnage, and but the work of a few moments. All was over, from the undulating position of the ground, before the retiring military were aware of what was going on; and when they did, Major Power remembered he was a magistrate of the county, and was entitled to command the services of Captain Grant and his party, for his own immediate protection. To secure that at all hazards was his first object —his next to be the first to tell his own version of the affair, and turn that, as he did all other things, to promote his own individual interest. The Sheriff, by nature, was a man of peace, and professionally, as an attorney, he had never fought but with the quill, so that he willingly resigned to the Major, as a military man, the unpleasant

task of reporting the fray, as well as directing any ulterior proceeding, and made the best of his way back to Clonmel, much shocked in mind, and thankful in spirit, that a merciful Providence had so marvellously permitted his ever returning.

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CHAPTER III.

THE SEQUEL.

That night the indefatigable Major vouchsafed neither slumber to his eyes, nor repose to his unquiet spirit, but continued, until a late hour, deep in consultation with his man Dan; he paced the narrow limits of his study at Drumgar, with a restless undecided step: there was an unquiet fever in his eye, that boded but little good, and he gradually spoke only at intervals; while the sergeant, in compliment to the active part he had taken in the late affair, was, by permission,

allowed to dose, if not to sleep, in a chair remotely placed from the fire ; his master, in the meantime continued addressing him occasionally, while he now and then muttered broken sentences to himself. The past day was to him fraught with too many exciting circumstances, to feel either comfortable or secure in the still thinking hours of reflecting night. If silent and alone in the broad glare of day, the hum of the very insects that wing the air, often protect the guilty man from the phantom of conscience. Nature's sounds and echoes then people the solitude around. The stern monitor of his embryo vices, his premeditated evil deeds, his secretly indulged flagitious crimes, visit him not then, but in the dark, silent, lifeless hours of gloom, when this world's pall falls over all created things, that undying emanation of another and higher sphere claims and must not be denied an audience. Major Power saw, in the burning lights that stood beside him—on the walls around him—on every

object his eye fell on, the indellible impress of the last look of old Jemmy Bourke—the tangled tresses of the fair murdered girl, the man who now slept so composedly within a yard of him had that day, with his full sanction, sent without a cry of mercy, into the presence of her God. He closed his eyes; but these objects were before him, behind him, around him, every where. He called it weak, nervous, unmanly, and like the doomed king of Egypt, hardened his heart against the "still small voice" that conjured up these spectres of conscience as beacons to his future life. Human nature is the same in every age, in every clime; its universal history, and the sacred word of inspiration are not at issue; both equally proclaim that there is an hidden light in the breast of every child of Adam, burning on through time, and itself a part of eternity; and both equally assure us that however quenched, it can never be extinguished. This living light, Major Power, in common with other men,

carried within his own breast ; but he chose not to walk in its *radii,* and for the present sought to puff it out, by shaking the sergeant violently by the shoulder, to secure the auxiliary of his awakened presence against its searching glare.

" Dan," he said, in a voice which betrayed the inward perturbation that shook his craven soul, " this is no time for your sleeping any longer ; the coroner must be here in a few minutes, and we should be ready to start the very moment he arrives, or the bodies will be removed before we get there."

" Sure it's a long way from morning yet, sir," returned the sergeant drowsily, opening his ferret-looking orbs, and glancing towards the candles that were still burning on the table.

" Not so far as you may think," replied his master snappishly, looking at his watch at the same time. " Day is breaking now, I am sure. If those shutters

were open, the candles might be put out."

"Betther lave them an' the ball-proof shutthers as they are, for to-night at laist," returned the sergeant with a meaning grin, "plenty ov the Gurtuagarry Boys I'll be bound outside there, to take a dead aim at us, wance they were down."

"True enough," replied his master, "but we may defy the best marksman amongst them, if we travel to the ground surrounded by the Dragoons, no better shield against a bullet than some of those well fed and well paid guardsmen."

"We'll want um afore we get to the end ov our journey, I'm thinking," remarked Dan drily, "for the Boys wor only put in wind yestherday to make a *clane* finish ov us to day."

"By what sergeant Mac Donnell could hear, late last evening, in the village," replied his master taking a hasty turn through the room, "some of them, by this

are cool enough; over thirty men and women as they were, he heard, were wounded, and a full dozen, at least, left for the Coroner to pocket his fees on, next assizes."

"An ill wind it is, that blows nobody good," returned the sergeant, grudgingly, "he'll get more by one of their carcases than the whole lot are worth; betther to pitch um all in a hole, and lose a barrel of lime on um at wance, than put the county to so much expence."

The Major stopped in the middle of his walk and fixed his eyes on the sergeant's face.

"What a regard you have for the county, Dan," he said, sneeringly, "you weren't thinking at all of the Coroner's enquiry, as to how that young girl in the window came by her death."

"Well then, I was, Major," returned Dan, starting to his feet, and shaking off the air of drowsiness with which he had hitherto pursued the conversation, "an' thinkin', moroever, ov what I should say

when the jury id ax me, did any body desire me to take a sure aim at her."

"Not at *her*," replied his master, emphatically, resuming his walk, with an air of vexatious discomposure at this palpable hit of Dan's.

"All wan in the end," resumed that worthy, who never permitted his master to jest at his expence, without returning a Rowland for his Oliver, "betther kill a poor sarvent girl, anny day, nor the misthress ov a family."

"You did it for the best, Dan," cried the Major impatiently, "but its likely to be an unlucky shot for us both. That confounded Grant, with all his tom-foolery, is a deeper fellow than one would think. He hit hard last evening, when I wanted him to scour the country with his men, and told me saucily enough, "that both he and they had got quite enough of *peasant* shooting for a whole season, not to say in one day to have looked on at such capital sport.' To avoid his being examined, I

have been so anxious to get the Coroner on the ground by day-light, and have the inquests over as early as possible, and besides, it's dangerous enough, having those cavalry fellows about the house ; once the young lady up stairs is stirring, she'd soon make herself heard, if she caught but a glimpse of them, and they're made of different stuff from the Scotch sergeant; no keeping their tongues quiet; blab they would, whether we liked it or no."

"Bothered Nell keeps the window and doore ov her room secured well," said Dan. "So, small fear ov her takin' a peep at um, an' if she hears their horses' feet at self, she'll think it's the two police ordherlies that's always ridin' here an' there with dispatches from ye'er honour."

"The rascals must have executed my last one but badly," cried the Major, impatiently, his thoughts recurring to what occupied his mind so fully at the moment, "they had time to be at head quarters and back again twice since they left this. It

now must be six o'clock, and they are not here yet; we'll never be out of this by seven."

As he spoke, the sound of horses' feet, coming at a smart pace up the gravel drive of the avenue, allayed his fears of delay, and seemingly compelled him to speak out more confidentially to his companion, in the brief moments that were left of their *tete-à-tete*, than he did during the long and protracted interview that was about now to be interrupted, like the postscript of a letter-writing lady, who indulges in interminable epistles to her host of dear, devoted friends, to whom she kindly sends a *nota bene* as a cogtranslation for the puzzling contents of her lengthy *billet doux*.

Major Power's parting advice to Sergeant Wetherell, as he helped him on with his great coat, contained the pith of his colloquial revelations that night.

"Deny, to the last, Dan, that you ever fired at all, and then both you and I are out of the scrape. The woman is dead

now—no harm done to any body to swear that the police shot her ; not one of them is left to contradict you. Grant and his men won't be present, and the people are not to be believed, and will have enough to do to defend themselves for the murder of the police. Stick to this, and all is safe ; besides, I think I can persuade the coroner to put you on the jury."

That last named official's loud knock at the hall door cut short any further instructions ; but none were needed, for the sergeant was an apt scholar, and had learned his part by heart, long before it was explained to him by his master.

In the grey twilight of a winter morning, the coroner, with Major Power riding by his side, his man, Dan, mounted in their rear, this triumvirate, surrounded by a strong escort of dragoons, and followed by two police orderlies, drew up on the battle-ground of the preceding day. In the struggling dawn of misty November, surrounding objects could not easily be dis-

tinguished by this cavalry party, though their approach was, for some time, observed by men who had that night divided their watch between the dead, and the interests of the living.

These were the Gurtnagarry boys, who, with Jim Sullivan for a leader, had revenged so direly on the sergeant's guard of police, the heartless murder of Mary Devaan; the rest of the mob had assisted, but the maddened lover of the ill-fated girl neither gave nor looked for mercy.

The party that accompanied him, backed him to the last, though many amongst them were severely wounded, and, when the police fired, some shot dead. In their foremost ranks, with the strength and fury of a maniac, had poor Jim fought to rescue, from the police, the wounded, (but as he thought) still living form of her he so truly loved; in the desperation of his anguish he grappled with, and knocked down (unarmed as he was), the stoutest amongst them, broke through every barrier

between her and him, and clasped his fair, bright-haired girl to his breast a corpse. The bullet that had lodged in Jim Sullivan's breast five minutes before, unfelt at the time, released for ever at that instant his devoted heart from the blight and horror of such a meeting—these hapless ones now lay, side by side, still cold and calm in the barn of their former master ; and hither Major Power with the coroner hied, to hold solemn inquest on the victims of his own unbridled will. The remains of the other bodies that had been shot, were removed early the night before, by their respective friends, and no trace of either dead or wounded now remained, save a heap of the mutilated carcases of the police, flung rudely together by no friendly hand, a top of each other, on the very spot where they fell.

The Gurtnagarry boys had mustered in the dwelling-house, freely supplied with whiskey by its master, who had escaped, where so many bled in his cause, with a

slight wound in the arm, though to do Mr. Dooly justice, he had been no idle spectator the day before, but fought with the desperation of a man who wrangles for his own ; in that short fatal struggle with the police, the chances of war had turned in his favour, and though Paddy, like Wellington, shed tears on the battle field, for the loss of so many personal friends, still, no private feeling was allowed to interfere with the public rejoicings for such signal success.

The *Io pean* of an Irish victory was duly observed ; the *Native* flowed freely, and had its wonted effect on the ardent spirits. The mercurial temperament of a naturally inflammable people, goaded into madness as they now were, by so lately witnessing what they considered wanton and inhuman murders, perpetrated indiscriminately on the weak and unoffending as on those who had both power and will to resist the civil authority. The majority of the killed and wounded had

been women and *garsoons*, for such always form the advanced guard of an Irish mob, and these helpless ones, with scarcely an exception, had received the discharge of the police, fired without aim or purpose except to kill those immediately before them. This circumstance, if possible, increased the rage of the people. Lashed to fury by the tragic death of the young, unoffending girl, cut off in the morning of her days, defending her mistress, and subsequently maddened to a climax, by the murder of her lover, in the first moment of his deadly revenge. They now yelled execration and defiance at Major Power and his party, and with the frantic gestures of flesh eating savages, rather than the demeanor of any civilised denizens of modern Europe, appeared at the well remembered window, literally roaring for his blood, but with a strong body of dragoons surrounding him Major Power and his man were even safe from the drunken, infuriated wretches, who thirsted

so wildly for their own barbarous vengeance. Infantry may and have been opposed and resisted by undisciplined men in their sober senses, but there is something in the well-appointed, fully accoutred dragoon, which awes the peasant into a momentary kind of respect for a mode of warfare with which he himself is totally unacquainted; even in his most drunken and reckless moments, the very housings of the noble animal, that stately inflexible looking figure bestrides, is to him a mystery, its training and obedience to the rein of its rider—a marvel.—The landlord of Paddy Dooly, then, ran no personal risk in visiting, at so exciting a time, in such goodly company the *locale* of his refractory tenant. The Gurtnagarry boys reviled, reproached, execrated and threatened, but neither assailed nor opposed the Major, as he and the strong party that were with him surrounded the barn—thither they were led by the extorted information of some countrymen they had met with on their way to Knockanure,

and whom they had compelled to accompany them thither ; from them they learned that the only bodies which had not been removed were waking in Dooly's barn, as any others that had been shot were strangers, and taken away by their friends, but that the young couple, now lying dead there had been servants in the house, and were to have been married the coming Easter.

This was all the information Major Power or the coroner could extract from the men, as they were, or pleaded to be, totally ignorant of any further particulars about the matter, and either could not, or would not tell, the names or number of the parties shot; but with a very *non mi recordi* line of evidence utterly baffled their interrogators, though reluctantly obliged to conduct them to the spot.

At the first approach of the dragoons, Paddy Dooly, with most of the men present, had retreated to the dwelling house, where they barricaded themselves up, prepared for a close siege, leaving some few

old men and the women of the party to watch over the remains of Mary Devaan and her fatally devoted lover. On this party, Major Power, the Coroner, and Sergeant Wetherell, preceded by the Police Orderlies, now intruded, leaving the dragoons outside, sword in hand, ready to come to their help should anything like resistance be offered; but of this there was nothing to apprehend, at least from those who watched the dead.

The dark, unequal light of a November morning was not sufficiently strong at this early hour to penetrate the dusky recesses of this temporary chamber of death; but the flickering glare of some dozen candles, placed at the head and foot of the rude bier, which occupied the centre of the building, revealed to them a scene it was not easy to forget. There lay, cut off in the prime of their youth and beauty, in the very noon-tide of their love, side by side, that fated couple; the glow of heroic devotion had not faded from the cheek of the murdered girl—the desperate resolve

still sat on the brow of her avenger—the icy grasp of the universal conqueror failed in effacing Time's last impressions on the clay-cold forms—the soulless bodies that lay before them. Death was there with all its imagery; but the flitting look of parting life was still present; the festooned sheets on the rafters above, the shrouded, motionless figures beneath the funereal lights around, and the muffled wail of the mourners as they raised their unearthly *keen* for the dead—divested not that look of its intense reality. In his secret soul, Major Power felt it another hand-writing on the wall against the day of retribution. Had an adder stung him, its effect could not be greater than the whispered voice of Sergeant Wetherell at this moment in his ear; but he shook off the feeling as he did many others before, and called on the Coroner to empanel a jury. With some difficulty this was accomplished, by pressing the men they brought with them into the service, and compelling some of those present to compose one. Sergeant Wetherell

was placed as foreman, and in due order this incongruous panel stood at either side of the bodies on the mode of whose death they were to pronounce a fair and impartial verdict. As the Coroner proceeded to swear them, a woman, who had hitherto sat silent at the head of the bier, her figure and face entirely concealed, by the ample blue cloak, whose hood completely muffled her head, now stepped forward, and in a voice of indignant expostulation, addressed the men in Irish. The effect on their dogged countenances was like a flash of electricity. To a man they all shrunk back with a look of horror, leaving the sergeant alone to represent the Jury. The lifeless bodies lay between him and this spokeswoman, whose harangue had so powerful an effect. She stood nearly opposed to him, at the other side of the bier, and flinging back the large hood that drooped over her face, wrung her hands violently, as one overcome with bitter emotion, and in a voice of high wrought passion, addressed

the dead. So sudden and so unexpected an interruption, paralysed for some moments part of her audience, that is, the coroner and his party, while every other creature present exhibited the most intense eagerness to catch the sound and sense of each impassioned word she uttered. Like the *improvatrice* of southern Italy, the Munster *keener* requires no preparation. The mere presence of death inspires her in the bold florid language of eastern poetry, to eulogise and commemorate the real or fancied virtues of the deceased. The gift or talent, if you will, is purely hereditary, and descends from mother to daughter, through a long line of generations. Amongst the higher order of Irish, the office is considered derogatory, and the services of the paid *keener*, substituted by any class above the peasant, still the restrant of education, the pride of station are not at all times sufficient to silence the descendent of a *keener*, and like the king's evil, no matter how great the preventive,

it will break out in the third and fourth generation; and the grand-daughter of *Cautha Keentho*, on the present occasion, forgot her rank as Mrs. Dooly, in the irresistible impulse of indulging in the predilective vocation of her family. With the passionate earnestness of unfeigned grief, heightened by the glowing, burning thoughts of her race, clothed in wild and national poetry, she now poured forth a lament, of heart touching melody, over the fair haired girl, and bright eyed boy, that lay murdered corpses before her; then swelling indignantly with her subject, raised her figure to its full height, and with an outstretched arm demanded vengeance on the head of him who had dealt so deadly a blow to her house, as mowing down the flowers that grew within its walls, cutting off the right hand of a good master, when they laid the loyal heart of Jim Sullivan in the dust, and plucking out the apple of a fond mistress's eye, when they stretched Mary Devaan beside him—then

sinking her voice suddenly to the low *coronach* of a practised *keener*, rocked her body to and fro over the inanimate remains before her, with a wordless gesture of disconsolate grief; while the peculiar cry she uttered was taken up, and echoed back by every woman present. For a brief moment this howl o'er the dead was indulged in; but, ere it could be interrupted Mrs. Dooly had resumed her former strain of wild, unconnected poetry, that in the very beauty of its abrupt grandeur silenced, involuntarily, both friend and foe, amongst her wondering audience. Nor did the latter attempt to interrupt her, until she called on Sergeant Wetherell in one of those unearthly cadences "to touch the corpse of her he murdered, and let her spouting blood tell the jury better than a thousand oaths, that *his* was the heart and hand that shot her."

This was an ordeal from which the sergeant, with all his cool effrontery, insensibly shrunk, and his master thought

it high time to check, if not put an end to altogether, any further accusation or interrogatory from Mrs. Dooly. At his private signal, the two police orderlies, at the same time, seized on her by the arms, and removed her forcibly to some distance from the bodies, while six dismounted *dragooners* with drawn swords, made their appearance in the barn—their spurs' jingle on its hard floor, their heavy disciplined tramp, their "Morion crest and sable plume," as well, perhaps, as the flashing of the naked steel in the corpse-lights, kept that party of dogged-looking men, huddled together at the upper end of the building, from attempting the rescue of its mistress, in one of her most inspired moments; though this panoply of war failed in restraining the loud *pullilew* that was raised by the women, at this gross infringement of the rights of one of their own order.

The coroner, in the meantime, with much legal form, again summoned the

jury, who were made to understand the swords of the cavalry should compel their attendance. They took their places very much with the air of untrained horses, put for the first time in harness, inwardly determined—with all the obstinacy of brute nature—not to draw.

The first and only witness that presented himself was Major Power; in a clear and wonderfully collected voice he gave a very succinct account of what he knew respecting the death of Mary Devaan, and narrated, with great composure, her appearance at the window, and the strong impression on his own mind, that the bullet which caused her death was fired by some one or other of the sergeant's guard of police, now no more.

Mrs. Dooly's voice at this moment gave a piercing cry of contradiction to this statement, but the rest of her evidence was buried in the hood of her blue cloak, tightly drawn over her head, by the two police orderlies in charge. An

old man on the jury had called out an involuntary, "Oh! *mille a murther.*" But save these interruptions, none other were offered to the assertion of the Major, except the stifled groans of the country people present might be interpreted into such.

The Coroner now informed the jury that they should satisfy themselves, by an inspection of the bodies, of the immediate cause of death; and all eyes were turned on Sergeant Wetherell, as foreman. by the people, and his fellow-jurors, to observe what part he would take in the investigation.

Nerved, in some degree, with that bravo feeling, never absent from the conscious guilt of a bad man—the sergeant boldly raised the white sheet that covered the remains of the ill-fated girl—his hand would have removed the shroud that concealed the wound that had pierced her heart, but the moment it came in contact with the lifeless body, the gushing blood of

his victim literally dyed that murderous hand scarlet.

The play of a galvanic battery may have been witnessed by some of our readers, but those who have never looked on its startling effects, could but faintly judge of the terror-stricken countenances of the jury.

In their dismay, the swords of the dragoons were forgotten; and both young and old amongst them fled, indiscriminately, from the contagious presence of their foreman, on whom their superstitious fears expected the immediate vengeance of God was about to be poured out.

The Coroner, as well as the Major and guardsmen present were taken by surprise; while the sergeant for a moment stood ghastly and speechless, with his blood-stained hand uplifted over his silent, lifeless accuser.

What followed was *pro bono publico.* The jury disagreed, and a hasty retreat was made by the Coroner and his whole

party, including the police orderlies—leaving Mrs. Dooly and the women present to resume their melancholy watch beside the dead.

The official duties were then hastily gone through over the mangled bodies of the police outside; the dragoons summoned, *circumstantibus*, as the only jury within reach; while the "Gurtnagarry Boys," formed themselves into an opposition panel in the window above, to shout out a unanimous verdict, "they got what they desarved, an' what him that sent um in id ill get, afore long."

Certain names were then called over by the Coroner; the bodies duly counted and identified by Major Power and the sergeant—the latter a task of some difficulty—and after a due investigation, the foreman of this military inquest pronounced "that every man Jack among them was dead, and that who killed them, was more than either he or any of his comrades would take on them to say; but killed they

were, and no mistake, though nobody was there to do it but themselves."

This, to the Coroner, was perfectly satisfactory; a verdict of "killed by some person or persons unknown," was formally made out, and a sergeant's guard of dragoons left to guard the bodies until a party of their former companions-in-arms arrived to remove them to the next police barrack, previous to interment—the horses' heads of the remainder of the cavalry were then turned in the direction of Drumgar, Major Power, the Coroner and Sergeant Wetherell forming the centre of the retiring party, while a mingled yell of defiance and hate issued from the window of the tenant still in possession of the disputed dwelling.

"You have but little chance of ejecting, in that quarter, I think, for some time,' remarked the coroner, to the lord of the soil, as they rode slowly away.

"None at all," said the Major, despondingly, "unless this business may turn up something in my favour; if it does, the land

must fall at once into my hands; but the thing is, who is to prove Dooly was at the slaughtering of the police; though there he was as sure as you were not; still not a man will come forward to either prove that or anything else about the matter."

"True enough," returned the Coroner, "and the worst of it is, there is no law to compel them, and those fellows are lawyers enough to know that well; you can't even prove he was amongst the mob, so you havn't a leg to stand on, to ground an information."

"Dan might have seen him," said the Major, hesitatingly.

"It won't do Major," returned the Coroner, laughing. "Dan's own hand is not wiped clean yet, so better keep him from poking it into other men's matters at present.

"Wait a wee," as the Scotch say, "those fellows will drink themselves into harm's way enough, if you only let them alone.

they promised fair this morning, roaring and shouting like bloodhounds, to throw another job in my way before the one in hand is paid for; and who knows, but like all honest men, you'd come by your own sooner than you think."

The Major shook his head, and the Coroner his friend's hand, as the party drew up at the cross-road, where they were to separate, both much edified, and highly satisfied with the public duty they had so conscientiously performed.

Sergeant Wetherell pushed on his horse's head so as to gain the saddle girth of his master.

"A thought struck me, Major," he said, in a low voice, "that I'd like sir, to be afther hearin' your *vardey* on."

The Major reined in his steed, so as to come within ear range of his man Dan's thoughts.

"I heerd something among the women above there," he continued in the same subdued voice, "ov ould Jemmy Bourke

bein' berrid early enough to-morrow, bekase the people ov the town-land had to take the couple at Dooly's, to Knock Grah church-yard afther: ould Jemmy's berrin place is towards the collieries in another direction entirely."

"What upon Heaven's earth have I to do with their confounded funerals?" cried the Major, impatiently.

"More than you think, Major," returned Dan, sagaciously, "not a nabur in the parish but ill go to take their last lave ov ould Jemmy to-night; he lived so long among um; an' Paddy Dooly that lived all his life within a stone's throw ov him wouldn't have it said he wasn't in id. The wake is held up at the forge on the cross-roads, an' I needn't tell you, Major, the barony 'tis in, is under the Insurrection Act."

"A good attorney was spoiled in you, Dan," cried the Major, with a chuckle of approbation. "You have put the whole thing in a nutshell for me; not a man on

the Townland but I'll eject by transporting him, and trap them altogether to-night, like a flock of plovers in a poacher's net. No fear then of taking possession, not a man left to shoot me."

"Afore you're sure ov that Major," returned Dan, ominously, "See that naither Jemmy or Pat Bourke escapes you; both ov them chaps had murther in their eye, when they looked at the old man givin' up the ghost."

"I'll secure them all," returned his master, confidently. "Not one shall escape me; an express must be sent off to Clonmel. I can't attend the commission until to-morrow, but I'll then bring in an escort of the Knockanure gentry that will account for my absence. In the meantime the cavalry must remain at the village; what police can be spared brought in from the out stations, and nothing left undone, Dan," he added, triumphantly, "to ensure us glorious success."

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIAL.

WHETHER the success Major Power, in the last chapter, so anxiously anticipated, was glorious or not, we shall not, at present, stop to enquire, but merely record the fact of his presence, the following morning, at an early hour, in the densely crowded town of Clonmel. The Commission might be said, by this time, to have culminated to its zenith ; the juries had caught the spirit of hanging from the Executive, and the judges themselves were not untinctured with the cruel policy, and popular feeling

of the day. Each trial, as it fatally ended, for the culprit under consideration, only added another stimulus to the public craving after legal slaughter. Men's minds were strangely and differently excited under the severe regimen prescribed by government for the moral and social disease of Tipperary ; but none but the class from which the victims were chosen, found fault with the aliment, catered to them by the state physician of the body corporate. All else, with the exception of a marked few, unanimously agreed the hanging and transporting system must, in time, restore the county to a state of convalescence. This purifying process had not been deviated from during the first days of the commission, and the exhilirating effects of its anticipatory blessings, seemed to shed a jubilee sort of feeling over the look and manner of each individual officially, or otherwise, engaged in bringing about what the Executive considered an Utopian *desideratum.* Still none were the less anxious in

trying the experiment to its fullest extent, from the Chief Baron on the bench, down to the meanest clerk that trudged to court with his master's bag.

A great question was felt to be at issue —the deciding of which, must, for the future, color, for good or for evil, the destiny of this hitherto irreclaimable county. The gentry of almost every class and every grade looked on things in a different light —to them, the commission was a *god send* in fortune's wheel, bringing about *their* turn, to pay back with interest to the lower orders, the iujury and wrong themselves and their brethren had from time to time received at the peoples' hands; and now their spirits rose in proportion as each fresh batch, brought up for trial, was sentenced in turn, to an untimely grave; or an equally sure, though perhaps more protracted one, far from the shores of their native land. To the gentry, either sentence was much the same; by both they got rid of an obnoxious neighbour, or as it

might be, a cavilling tenant; still (for example's sake) the hanging mode of transit from the county, was, by some zealous men, amongst their order, considered, on most occasions, worthy of a preference. Foremost in this class was Major Power, and his presence now in the magistrates' box at the court-house of Clonmel, was looked on as a powerful auxiliary by the surrounding J. P's., who greeted his arrival amongst them with a universal murmur of gratulation, at his late signal escape, and prompt and decisive conduct, so gallantly displayed in the ejection of his tenants. The Major disclaimed and explained, and though most of the leading magistrates present had received a lengthy dispatch of the whole affair, revised and corrected by the Major himself, still all lent a willing and eager ear to the *viva voce* edition, he now favoured them with. By the Major's own narrative, he was neither more nor less than a martyr of forbearance, and a perfect prodigy of valour, and his

auditors, no way unbelieving, heartily commended him as such. Nay, as something more when he recounted the seizure he he had made, the night before, at a forge in his neighbourhood, of some of the most daring and blood thirsty Rockites in the whole county—met together under the pretext of waking an old man—actually in the very act of swearing each other, when seized on, and marched off directly to the next town; there placed on cars and sent on to Clonmel that morning; and now safely lodged in the county gaol, with bills against them, this very moment before the Grand Jury, carefully prepared, as soon as the fellows were caught.

"Up to every thing, Power."

"A wonderful man," burst from all sides; and the Major sat down a proud one, with his light wig curled to its extremest point, and a look of heroic satisfaction in his eye, as he met the approving glances, so liberally bestowed on the enterprising magistrate, whose extraordinary, activity at such a crisis, con-

ferred a public benefit. With a keen relish for the laurels he had won, and an eager desire to cull more, he remained in his present seat not long stationary ; but with a very imposing, though somewhat fidgety, air, removed his august presence to the vicinity of the law officers of the Crown. To them he would fain have recounted his successes —but the wit of the bar-box is exclusively its own, The conceded half hour of legal badinage had not yet expired, when the retort courteous, 'the quip valiant' are freely bandied around, midst a shower of puns and witticisms, that, like the whetting of tempered steel, sharpens either instrument in this friendly encounter, to prepare its mettle for a more serious one, when turned, the next moment, against their client's adversary as a foe. Such men had neither time or inclination to sympathise with the petty success of a petty mind. And the Major was handed over to the Attorney General's "devil," as a congenial

spirit, to take a part in his *Bombasto Furioso.*

Counsellor Bragster could appreciate such a character as the Major's—his own was of the *Bravura* cast, where noise and nonsense are substituted for either good taste, or good sense. Froth and bubble stood proxy for sound argument and logical deduction in the harangues of the counsellor; and declamatory vociferation and reckless assertion were the gems, of oratory and truth, with which his long-winded speeches were studded; yet, strange to say, this compound of stupid vulgarity and wordy pretension, with a matchless assurance of his own, had elbowed, jostled, and boxed his way into a notoriety, such as it was, when men of his profession, a thousand times his superior in intellect and cultivation, might be reproached as briefless, and were left idle loungers in that hall, of which, one day, they were to form the brightest ornament. But the counsellor, like many of his class,

carved out a road to fame and fortune, whose foundation was neither based on brilliant talent, or industrial research—his was a bye path, where professional cunning and boastful exaggeration gave him a slippery footing in a sphere the lowly bred as well as the lowly born man, was unqualified to occupy. Still Bragster was there; and why he was—to himself, might be a marvel—and no doubt was a puzzle to the senior and junior bar, though some hungry attorneys were anything but mystified about the matter; and with the memory of his well served dinners, still fresh on their gratified senses, could solve the enigma of his up-rise, satisfactorily if they would—but they were fed—so was Bragster's undeservedly filled bag—and the public pronounced its owner "a vastly clever and leading man on the Leinster circuit." With Major Power, and men of the same calibre, he was infallible, and his advice and assistance had been sedulously courted by the Major, relative to the

approaching trials, in which he was so deeply interested.

Bragster and he now discoursed confidentially of these matters, and the former with his usual bullying air of confidence, promised the Major a verdict according to his most sanguine wishes. The Judge's crier had called out repeatedly—"Silence in the Court." The chief justice and his colleague had taken their seats with due formality. The cold, callous, impenetrable looking Attorney-General, stood brief in-hand, more like a piece of lifeless sculpture, than a breathing, animated form of flesh and blood, about to take an active part in deciding the life or death of his fellow men; the eye alone betrayed the workings of the soul within, and from its "bright revealings" flashed that unmistakeable talent, that, with the force of an *impetus*, had pushed its owner rapidly within view of the crowning summit of professional success. Bragster with much bustle succeeded in securing, what all his

life he had been in search for, a *place to his wishes*, and the senior and junior lawyers of the Crown, like the courtiers of a play-house queen, were not absent from this forensic pageant. Opposed to this formidable phalanx of legal skill, stood the solitary advocate, on whom rested the hopes and fears of the prisoners at the bar for an acquittal.

"Cornelius Mac Carthy, commonly known as Mac Carthy More, and Martin Sweeney, were then arraigned; for that they, not having the fear of God before their eyes, but instigated by the devil, feloniously conspired with person, or persons unknown, to murder Joseph Power, Esqr., of Drumgar, generally known under the name and title of Major Power, and Daniel Wetherell, his servant; and the said Martin Sweeney for attempting to commit said murders on the night of the 28th of October last."

"Guilty, or not guilty!" was the solemn query of the court, and every eye was

turned on the prisoners in the dock. A moment's pause, and the response of—"Not guilty" from both, came back in the voices of men, who could die, but would not sue for mercy.

The long panel of the jury was then called over, and the Crown challenged every name in turn, except those who corresponded with a list, Major Power had previously slipped into the hand of Bragster. The counsel for the defence was here at sea; a stranger himself to the names or faces of the jurors and his instructions did not go so far as to say any were objectionable; older hands saw at once the immeasurable advantage his adversaries, at the first start, by this manœuvre, had gained over him, and agreed amongst themselves that his case was hopeless—young, gifted, and eloquent he was, but had he been a Curran, or a Burke, the twelve men who were that day selected as jurors, would have brought in the fatal "guilty" as a verdict.

"Nothing, counsellor, like a well-directed challenge for making a jury agree," whispered Major Power into the ear of Bragster.

"Forestalling a market, Major," retorted the lawyer, conceitedly.

The Attorney-General here opened the case in his most impressive manner—drew a frightful and revolting picture of the blood-stained county he was in, "where crime was looked on as a social virtue, its exposure and reprehension a sacrilege to be expiated only by the life of the individual who stepped out of the beaten track, to bring to justice the heartless perpetrators of the foulest murders that ever disgraced humanity.

That day, a witness was to be produced before them, whose evidence it was the bounden duty of the jury to receive impartially and fairly, when the door of the jury box was closed on them, it should completely shut out the popular prejudice against the name of an *informer;* for only

from that class alone in many cases, could they hope for information to criminate the midnight assassin—the stealthy murderer, whose companions in crime must necessarily know more of their habits and vices, than the constituted authorities of the country or the honest man in their neighbourhood. The *informer*, then, was not to deemed unworthy of credence by a jury, nor of protection by a government who were determined to visit, with the utmost rigour of the law, the social depravity of the people—and he stood there to assure them that Commission would be held after Commission; that he would come again and again, until peace and good order were restored to that county,"

The sensation in that crowded court was immense—and the Attorney-general proceeded to state the facts of the case—boldly and prominently he placed them before the Jury—and then his clear ringing voice was silent. For a moment. his breathless audience seemed to listen to its spell-like

echoes—and then, a slight bustle—and Barney Maher stood on the table—was duly sworn, and with the crier's rod in hand, was called on by the Attorney General, "to identify the prisoners at the Bar."

Barney looked paler and thinner than when he and one of them had last met; but there was the same reckless expression of eye—the same bold carelessness of manner—the same hardened impenitence of look, with, perhaps, a more unbounded license to commit evil pervading the eye, look, and manner of the whole man, than on that occasion. Without a muscle's falter, he laid the rod he held in his hand on the head of either prisoner, and detailed clearly and circumstantially, a series of facts, many of which had originated in the fruitful imagination of Major Power; but, nevertheless, the proving of which, satisfactorily, to a jury must necessarily ensure a verdict of "guilty" to the prisoners. To break down the testimony of the *informer*, then, was the

principal object of the young, talented lawyer, who now tried the witness's mettle by a severe fire of cross-questioning; but Barney Maher was proof against this searching examination, he perfectly understood the part he was to play, and performed it to a miracle; and no tragedian ever walked the boards with a purer aim after excellence than this, strictly speaking, tragic actor stepped on the green table to do his *dèvoir* before a discriminating public. With a free-and-easy, much-at-home look, he answered queries, without hesitation, that any man, with one particle of character remaining, would have shrunk from avowing, far less gloried in; exhibiting himself as a monster of heartless atrocity; but a *mediocre* line was beneath the ambition of Barney Maher; to astonish and excel, formed the very basis of his character, on which circumstances erected a superstructure of evil, that rendered him, in the prime of his manhood, a gigantic wreck of moral deformity. With an unblushing

cheek, and hardened brow, he now admitted to counsel, whilst under a trying cross-examination, the most flagitious acts of his lawless life, boastfully enumerated the deeds of blood, in which he had taken an active and personal part since the days of his boyhood, and coolly explained to the Court the varying prices he had, at different times, received for murdering some one or other of his fellow-creatures; summing up the turpitude of his Demon life by boldly stating the liberal terms with which, on those occasions, it was his habit to transact business.

"Nivir axin' more for doing the job than was convaneyent; always expectin' thirty shillin's, at laist, for shootin' a man, when the man, that wanted him shot, had a bit ov land ov his own, an' could afford payin' dacently for puttin' his inimy out of the way; but he defied anny body to say he iver baulked a poor man that wanted a turn at his hands, on 'count ov the *rhino*— No! he'd scorn the like; he as often sent

the daylight through a fellow he nivir seen before, for the poor man's glass ov whiskey, as ivir he did for the *Boddagh* farmer's one pound ten, down and down."

The sensation in the Court was appalling; and, amidst a shudder of horror from the professional men at all sides, this wholesale murderer was sent down.

Major Power and Sergeant Wetherell, were then severally sworn; their evidence went fully to corroborate the testimony of the first witness, and both in turn were searchingly cross-examined. The Major solemnly asserted "that from his previous knowledge of Barney Maher, he would say he considered his oath in a court of justice worthy of credence, and that he had known men, who would commit a murder but would not swear falsehood." This metaphysical distinction seemed to have its due effect on the jury, and the young advocate of the prisoners rose to address them under the distressing conviction, that an unfavourable impression had

been already made on the minds of the twelve men in the jury box, requiring his most strenuous efforts to remove, ere he could procure, for his clients, an acquittal. Had he known perhaps, that ere one tittle of evidence was gone into, those twelve men had pre-judged the prisoners at the bar, the brief he held in his hand might have been indignantly flung up; but of this fact he was unaware, and with the desperate courage of a morally brave man, who has but one thread left, "whereon to hang an argument," he brought to this unequal encounter, mental powers, taxed to their utmost, professional zeal, as well as ability, to support his cause. The only witness called on for the defence was Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, who, it was expected, would speak favourably to the character of either prisoner. His name was now repeatedly shouted by the criers of the court, but the good old knight was no where to be found; though his appearance that morning had

been remarked in court, listening with much anxiety to the opening of the trials.

"He is, by this, half way to Lisfinn," whispered Major Power, in the ear of Bragster, "we managed it beautifully; the express did not arrive more than two hours since," His friend looked mystified, and the Major went on—"You must know young Fitzmaurice, of Hyde Park, was shot all but dead last night, crossing from the stables to his dwelling-house; the family were in a state of distraction, unable to write. I met the messenger, dispatched by them to apprise his father, who is serving here on the grand jury, as I came into Clonmel, this morning, frightened out of his wits, at the thought of looking for his master in the crowd, handed him over to a police orderly, to lodge in safety in the barracks, and report the matter himself, at a proper time.

"You may guess the rest, counsellor," added the Major, laughing heartily, "the

old knight has a Fitz and a Maurice in his name; who could blame a policeman, a stranger in the county, mistaking him, for my description of the father of the man that was shot."

Bragster chorussed the savage glee of the Major, increased wonderfully by the air of disappointment and vexation that swept across the excited visage of the young advocate for the prisoners. The wretched men themselves hitherto had borne up, but this desertion, in their utmost need, pressed hard to unman them; they had listened with intense interest to the clear, lucid statement of the Attorney General, bringing forward with logical precision, *ad seriatum*, astounding facts; their startling disclosures amazing the prisoners themselves, more than any other person in the court; while the calm, unimpassioned matter of fact voice and manner of the speaker, convinced them almost, for a moment, against the evidence of their own

senses, of the truth of every word he uttered.

Barney Maher's evidence dispelled this momentary illusion, on the minds of the prisoners; every other feeling was swallowed up in the indignant contempt excited by the perfidy and cold blooded enormity his disclosures, as related of himself, so fearfully detailed.

"God couldn't be in Heaven," whispered Mac Carthy to his companion in the dock, "if the black oath ov that villin could hang an honest man; never give up, Martin, for the likes ov what sich as him could swear. Sir Maurice i'll smash every word ov it before he's on the table five minutes."

Sir Maurice, alas! could not be produced, and both prisoners staggered under this severe blow to their cause. Mac Carthy, however, bore up manfully against a disappointment that, even to his own judgment, boded fatally as to an acquittal; and the heroic old man tried to cheer the

wretched prisoner beside him, with hopes that did not exist within his own breast.

Martin Sweeney was not insensible to this kindness, though he stood apparently calm and motionless, clinging to the iron railing of the dock; outside it knelt his wife, that long, fearful of day agony, its tortuous length prolonged by legal disquisition on points of law and professional etiquette, while she, who endured its racking misery, spoke as fond wives will speak in the dark hour of a husband's shame and sorrow; hers dared not trust himself to a reply; but there was a language, intelligible to Biddy Sweeney, in the relaxed muscles of the face she so intently gazed on, whenever that husband's eye rested on the faded but still beautiful countenance of his heart-stricken wife; their only child lay hushed in her arms, without motion or murmur. The very intensity of its parents, sufferings, awing, as it were, its childish nature into silent submission and profound repose. Few in that court could shake off

the interest created by such a group. The struggle for manly firmness on the agonised brow of Martin Sweeney, the unutterable love and wordless sorrow of his eye, as it rested on the calmly sleeping face of his child, or met the soothing, unreproachful glance of the fair, broken being that knelt beside him. The smothered agonies of *her* woman's heart, at the fearful parting looming o'er the darkened prospects of her wedded life—were visible to all ; but the eye of Him alone, who formed the pulse of human suffering, can pierce the depths of its despair and misery—none other could enter into that sorrowing wife's bitter retrospection of the past—its frightful contrast with the present. The fair promise of her once happy lot—its gloomy close beside a felon's grave ; the bitterness of that hour, public sympathy did not reach. They only saw a criminal in the dock, well dressed and well looking above many of his class, bearing up against a load of misery, that was more than shared by the

wretched partner of his life beside him; but the history of his garb, or the abstract cause of the crime he was charged with were equally unknown, or uncared for, by men whom his appearance might interest, but could not swerve from the inflexible principle laid down by their rulers for the civilisation of a refractory peasantry.

The very decency of his dress and demeanour was to them an aggravation of his guilt; it was a voucher in their eyes that a plea of ignorance could properly form no part of his defence. Similar feelings were excited by the appearance of Mac Carthy. The schoolmaster was drest with unusual attention, wearing a decayed suit of black, which, it was whispered amongst his scholars, had once belonged to Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, but appearing at intervals only, for years, could not authentically be traced to the old knight as an original proprietor. His long white hair was combed smoothly at each side of his haughty, irascible looking features; while eye, ear, and hand,

took part in the proceedings going on, in which he was deeply interested, and on the issue of which his own life or death depended; still, there was an unshrinking firmness about the look of the old man that never wavered for a moment, during that long, protracted trial. The absence of Sir Maurice, as a witness in his favour, threatened to shake it for an instant; but even then, the disappointment seemed to be felt more on Sweeney's account than on his his own; like a passing cloud o'er a summer sun, this momentary shadow cast no lasting gloom. There was a fierce brightness in the schoolmaster's eye that defied despair.

The counsel for the defence rose to speak on the evidence, surrounded by a breathless audience. Much was expected from him by men of his own profession; more, perhaps, by the general body of listeners around; but who can tell the expectations of a criminal, from the advocate whose pleading is supposed to condemn

or acquit. The lawyer himself must, to a certain degree, feel the heavy responsibility of the arduous task he undertakes; but could he, for a moment change places and feelings with the prisoner at the bar, and then resume his former position, the Herculean toil would be abandoned as hopeless and absurd. Happily for the young Counsel now rising to address the Court, that no misgiving of this kind crossed his mind, to unnerve it in the discharge of a duty, painfully onerous as he felt it, when the lives of two of his fellow-creatures depended on every word he was about to utter; and though expectation had been raised to the utmost, still well and faithfully did this zealous advocate, alone, and unassisted, discharge that duty in the eyes of his clients, the court, and the public; patiently and skilfully did he untwist and unravel the mingled yarn of truth and falsehood contained in the evidence of Barney Maher; and boldly and fearlessly did he denounce the *informer* as the foulest blot that ever

disgraced fallen nature—an outrage on the very name of humanity—a Thug in the heart of civilized life. The lurking assassin's pay scarcely more than a glass of raw whiskey, or the heart's blood of his murdered victim. How strenuously did he plead with the jury, to discard the evidence of such a wretch; how bitingly caustic, did he advert to Major Power's discriminating faculty, in discovering verity and truth in the breast of a professed murderer; and how feelingly eloquent did he appeal to the twelve men before him, not to send to their last and long account two such men as his clients on the unsustained oath of a heartless miscreant like unto that avowed assassin, Barney Maher.

The case for the defence closed, and Bragster, in reply, rose to address the jury. Could ingenious reasoning, eloquence, or truth, have moved their minds, in the prisoners' favour, Bragster's harangue was not calculated certainly to remove the impression. There was no subject irrevelant

to that under consideration on which he did not touch, and dilated most freely on those remotest from the case in hand, resting the grounds of a conviction principally on the absence of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, to which circumstance, with great felicity, he applied the only line of Shakespeare he had ever read; but which he, nevertheless, delighted to quote, designating his "talented friend" at the other side, a second "Owen Glendower" calling spirits from the vasty deep; and then, demanding in his (Bragster's) most bullying tone—"Did they come?" The effect was such as might be expected; the bar box bestowed the usual meed of applause to his rhapsodies—a derisive laugh; and the jury retained the same opinion they held before the "learned counsel" stood up to speak. Still the immortal lines of the Bard of Avon, from time to time, rang in their ears, thread-bare by repetition; but even a great man's hacknied sayings were, to them, preferable to the paucity of Brag-

ster's own. He had early drawn on the patience of the Court; but ere he had concluded his interminable address, it was utterly exhausted; both judges and jurors began to be hungry; for, however others might manage to steal out for refreshment, they had partaken of none since the afternoon luncheon, and it was now nine o'clock at night; the prisoners had been at the bar since ten that morning; and, save an orange flung by some kindly hand across the Court for their use, neither of them had tasted anything; both now looked haggard and exhausted in the flickering, unequal light around them. The judges dosed on the bench, and most of the bar had retired to discuss their dinner, whilst Bragster was finishing his speech, and urging vehemently on the jury the absolute necessity that existed for convicting the prisoners, if they wished to preserve their homes and their families in safety by furnishing the rockites of Tipperary with a warning in the severity of *their* doom, dwelling

at great length on the influence of Mac Carthy in the part of the country he lived in, and calling on the jury to show, by their verdict that night, that the interests of their county were regarded in giving up to the just punishment of its laws, this old and hardened offender, as well as the younger delinquent by his side—outlaw, gaol-breaker, assassin—fit companion for the hoary-headed ruffian that stood next him in that dock, and which the twelve honest men he addressed should unhesitatingly find guilty of a most unprovoked attempt to murder one of the most zealous, upright, humane, and active magistrates, he would say, in all Ireland; and not satisfied with that enormity, actually planned to take the life also of his most attached and faithful servant.

This eulogy on master and man were scarcely concluded, when the *refrain* of Bragster's oratory was fallen back on, and "the spirits from the vasty deep" again alluded to, and in mock heroics pompously

summoned. This time the call was responded to ; but not as he would have wished, for Sir Maurice Fitzgerald stood, wet and travel-soiled, on the table immediately before him—Bragster tried to rally at the sight of this apparition, and challenged the old Knight as " to where he came from ?" Before he could reply, the Chief Justice had spoken.

" An unnecessary question, Mr. Bragster, the gentleman seems to have caught a good wetting—of course he's just arrived from ' the vasty deep.' "

A roar of laughter followed this *jeu de mot* of a man well-known to the bar as the wittiest of his day, and, ere it subsided, Sir Maurice was giving his evidence to the Court, in the favour of both prisoners. Of MacCarthy's character, he could speak positively ; for with him he was acquainted intimately for many years, nor did he believe that he could be guilty of any misdemeanor, or unlawful act, without his (Sir Maurice's) knowledge during

that period, and none such ever came under his observation; but, on the contrary, he considered him an honest, industrious, peaceable man; and that as far as he knew Martin Sweeney, he came under the same class; that he had heard, he (Martin Sweeney) was taken in the house of Drumgar on the night of the 28th. of October; but that there was much mystery connected with that night, which never had been cleared up, and that until it was he never would consider the prisoners at the bar went there to murder Major Power, or his servant. On cross-examination he admitted "that Mr. Fitzgerald had met Sweeney at Drumgar that night; but that the impression on his grandson's mind was, that Sweeney was innocent of the charge of murder."

This was objected to as evidence by Bragster, and the old Knight made a firm and manly appeal to the judge for a delay of judgment in Sweeney's favour, until Mr. Fitzgerald's return to this country, from

whence he had been summoned on most urgent business not a week since, which alone prevented his appearing there that day to testify to the characters of both prisoners, and prove much in Sweeney's favour respecting the night he met him at Drumgar.

Here Bragster again interfered, and Sir Maurice accounted for his own absence that morning, by stating the unpleasant mistake that had occurred, and which brought him post to where he expected to meet his dying grandson; but on ascertaining that he had not even returned to Lisfinn, Sir Maurice determined on setting off with all possible speed to Clonmel; and now that he had accounted, he trusted satisfactorily to the court for his absence, he earnestly hoped his testimony might not prove unavailing, but have its due weight with the jury, in procuring an acquittal for the prisoners.

The old knight's evidence was admitted by the bench, and the chief baron, hungry

and fidgetty, turned to charge the jury. Rembrandt would have chosen such a scene as the court presented at this moment, for a *chef d'oeuvre*—the back ground, all shadow and gloom; in the foreground, life and light—but unearthly—startling—horror stricken. The noble, dejected air of Sir Maurice, fatigued and worn out in body, but unbent in mind. The parted lip, and ghastly cheek, of Biddy Sweeney, the remorse of her husband's eye, as it rested in agony on her face, and the unblenched brow and haughty glance of Mac Carthy More, with the sand in Time's hour glass, running swiftly down before his mental gaze, would, in itself, have formed a picture worthy of the old master; but some Machiavel artist should have depicted the Demonaical glance of Major Power, at this moment, to the jury, and Hogarth's lively pencil could alone have done justice to the rest of the *dramatis personæ* present.

The Chief Baron, in a broad Munster ac-

cent, delivered one of his most pithy addresses.

"Gentlemen of the jury, if you believe the evidence brought before you in this case, you will find the prisoners at the bar guilty—if you do not believe it, as a matter of course, you will acquit them."

The jury bowed gratefully for the Chief Baron's forbearance in not inflicting a speech at this late hour, and retired. Five minutes of intense suspense to some hearts in that court, the same brief period of indifference to others, and the jury were again in their box. Every eye was fixed on the foreman's face, as he slowly enunciated—

"Guilty, my lord."

A cry of despair was heard in the court, from whom it issued none could tell; but it was caught up by the midnight watchers outside, and its heart-rending echoes reverbrated back, through the silent but not deserted streets of Clonmel. The reveller, at the midnight assembly started at its

sound. The dream of the sleeper was broken by its wail; but the fashion of the day precluded a passing thought on the fate of the victims, that drew from a people's agony so unearthly a cry of despair.

The clear, sharp tones of the clerk of the crown's voice was heard, ere that wild howl subsided; abruptly demanding of the prisoners—

"Had they any thing to say, why death and execution should not be awarded against them." With the irresistible impulse of desperation, Biddy Sweeney sprang on the table, and flung herself wildly on her knees before the Attorney General, the proudest tribute, perhaps, ever laid at the shrine of his talent, for it was the homage of ignorance to genius.

She had listened to his statement that day, and to her untutored mind, he, who could make truth falsehood, and falsehood appear truth, was omnipotent.

"Spare him, my lord," she cried, in a

voice whose grief was appalling from its reality. "Spare my darlin' boy's blood, an' the sinful, disthracted crather afore you will pray late an' airly for you an' yours in this world an' the next. Oh, my lord, keep the doore of mercy open for us, an' God above us i'll never shut the gate of Heaven in ye'er face. I ax but his life," she passionately cried, "an' the life ov the dacent ould man, that never would be standin' where he is but for our throuble. Don't send his grey hairs to the grave afore their time; but thransport us all to the end of the earth, though hand, act, or part you, Corny Mac Carthy, nor you, Martin Sweeney, had never in a murdher."

Bragster would have interposed at the instigation of his friend, the Major; but the wretched woman wildly went on.

"Lave me to ax for mercy," she cried, "as you hope for it from Him that's lookin' down on us all this night. Let me plade for mercy from him that could make black white in my favor, an' God that's over us,

that gave him the power, will pay it back wan day or another, on the double to his own heart."

Alas! no such special pleader as a heart lay concealed in the breast of the Attorney General, and his 'devil' acted up to his name, on the present occasion, by having the hapless suppliant removed forcibly off the table—her faded beauty in all the *abandonne* of despair—her unlettered eloquence—her womanly devotion to the cause of her husband and her friend—had, however, its effect on one heart present, never insensible to her sex's fascination; from boyhood to manhood—from manhood to the grave—it beat as tumultuously behind the studied drapery of a justicial robe, as it ever did beneath the ardent young student's cassock and gown. The formal curls of a judge's wig prevented not its wearer from appreciating all that was beautiful in woman's mind, or woman's form. The living aspiration of her loveliness and truth, that supplicated to others

that night in vain, was neither overlooked nor unresponded to by the Chief Justice on the bench—he briefly consulted with his brother judge ; and then, again, the clerk of the crown demanded what the prisoners had to say before sentence was past ?

Mac Carthy alone attempted to reply ; Sweeney stood, apparently, insensible in the dock.

The voice of the old man trembled at first ; but gradually acquired its usual firmness of tone.

" I sprung, my lord, from an ould stock ; the trees ov the forest wor cut down by the thraytor an' stranger ; but root an' branch fall only with me. I ax but for the shell when the nut is taken. My life you gave to the perjurer an' informer—my sowl goes to my God ; but I crave my body, at ye'er hands, to lie in the dust with them ' that come afore me.' Kings an' Princes, in their day," he added, while his eye kindled with all the proud recollections of an untainted line ; then, as he mentally

contrasted the present with the past, his voice sunk into the accent of despair. "What have I to live for, or ax for now—the last ov my race—but to lay my bones beside their clay ?"

The old man's prayer was acceded to. The black cap was placed on the god-like brow of the Chief-Justice, and the solemn sentence of death pronounced against Cornelius Mac Carthy, and Martin Sweeney, with the reservation of the body of the former for his friends; and the day left unfixed for the execution of both.

The disappointment of Major Power and the other magistrates present, was very great, for they had more than hoped—they had fully expected—the wretched criminals, *ad terrorem*, would be ordered from the dock to execution.

The Chief Baron was fully aware of their feelings on the occasion ; but he preferred securing, (by leaving the sentence in his brother judge's hands ;) the company of his colleague at supper that night, where the

flashes of his wit would outsparkle the champagne to any murmur of theirs on the subject.

The trial that created most interest during the Commission was over. The court was adjourned—the prisoners removed; and the young, anxious barrister, who defended them so nobly, yet so vainly, whispered in the ear of Biddy Sweeney as he passed her going out,

"There is a hope left for your husband; your pleading gained more for him than mine. The Chief-Justice will grant him a reprieve."

CHAPTER V.

HANGING BY TORCH-LIGHT.

THE last sentence, in the foregoing chapter, was overheard by Serjeant Wetherell, who gratified his malice, not his humanity, in keeping near Biddy Sweeney after her forcible expulsion from the table, glutting his diseased appetite for human misery, by standing by an apparently indifferent and unconscious spectator of throes of anguish and despair, that might well elicit pity from the most obdurate hearted being in the Universe.

Sergeant Wetherell was either something more, or something worse; he only felt unmixed pleasure at the sight, and lost no

time in communicating to his master what threatened to interrupt his fiendish enjoyment.

The Major was sorely discomfited by the information, already much provoked at the clemency of the Chief Justice; and hastened to consult some of the most active of his brother magistrates, met together to discuss their supper at the Great Globe Hotel, as well as the different bearings and expressed opinions relative to the trials that day concluded. He found them very noisy, very hungry, and very much dissatisfied with the indefinite sentence just pronounced,

"The Chief Justice reminds me of an old song, Major," said a brawny-looking, fox-hunting justice of the Quorum, to our friend Major Power, as he entered, "he tells us he'll marry, but he doesn't tell us when. The jury might as well have acquitted those fellows to-day, as to leave the rope dangling about their necks, to be 'turned off' at a judge's pleasure, in-

stead of making a clean finish at once to benefit the county."

"It's no laughing matter, Dunbar," said a sharp, wizen-looking man stepping forward, and placing his back, with the most imperious air, straight before the centre of the fire; then dragging asunder, with a look of dogged determination, the coalesced skirts of his frock coat, throwing out his right leg in an advanced position on the rug, prepared to address and redress the malcontents around. With such a party there was no fear of the Major finding himself in a minority.

After supper a strong remonstrance was drawn up by universal acclaim, addressed to the Chief Baron, to be presented, by some of the oldest and most influential magistrates present, the following morning, in which was very urgently set forth the great injury that must accrue to the peace and well-being of the county by any shew of mercy to the risoners under sentence at the present

crisis, further stating, that government had graciously vouchsafed a Commission to enquire into, and punish the crime by which they were every where surrounded, but unless a principle of just severity was recognised, and adhered to in the administration of that commission ; its good effects on their county must be null and void ; therefore, did they, with all humility, urge on the Chief Baron, the absolute necessity of striking terror into the people, by the immediate execution of the two prisoners under sentence ; they were of a better class than others who were to suffer, particularly the elder delinquent, Mac Carthy, who from his birth, and other circumstances had obtained great influence in his neighbourhood ; so that they very properly might be dealt with as warnings, to a more ignorant, but not more depraved class of Rockites amongst the people. Finally, these gentlemen would suggest that a torch-light execution during the sitting of the Commission, when the

town was filled with country people of the lower order, would be attended with the most beneficial effects, and tend to restrain and terrify the peasantry more than a dozen mid-day executions under ordinary circumstances.

"The Chief Baron must attend to such a document as that," remarked, sagaciously, the wizened man before alluded to, "though Sir Maurice and every man of the same stamp in the county stood up to interfere in the prisoners' favour."

The wizened gentleman was right, Sir Maurice Fitzgerald or men of his stamp had no influence in the councils of the day; and the remonstrance, as a matter of course, met with due attention in the proper quarter.

The following morning was an equally busy one as the preceding, with Major Power; for his former tenants on the lands of Knockanure were that day to be tried under the Insurrection Act--and their *ci-*

devant landlord and his man Dan were the principal witnesses for the Crown.

Patrick Dooly, Michael Bourke and James and Patrick Bourke, with some of the lesser tenants on the land, were then arraigned for having, on the — night of — been found out of their lawful dwellings in a proclaimed district, and for administering to each other and to persons nnknown, unlawful oaths on that night."

The prisoners pleaded guilty, and threw themselves on the mercy of the court—inasmuch as some of them had no dwelling, it being levelled that day by their landlord and the rest were met together at a forge to attend the wake of an old and respectable neighbour."

This was considered a plea of not guilty, and evidence was gone into accordingly.

The case was proved satisfactorily to the jury; and every threatening notice received by the landlord for a year before, produced by Major Power to sustain it. In this, he had a two-fold object, for it gave

him a public opportunity of proving the spirit of Ribbonism that existed amongst his tenantry; and both he and Sergeant Wetherell swore point blank to the handwriting of Cornelius Mac Carthy, as the writer of these letters missive, thus strengthening the hands of the Chief Baron, in giving a finishing twist to the rope that was already coiled round the neck of the ill-fated schoolmaster.

The result almost satisfied the Major's most sanguinary wishes—the jury without retiring, brought in a verdict of "guilty," and before the prisoners were removed from the dock, Cornelius Mac Carthy was placed there to receive the final sentence of the law. Why Martin Sweeney was not beside him, the heart of the Chief Justice might explain; but his junior brother on the bench accounted for it to the magistrates, who waited on him to remonstrate on that morning, and demand the wretched man's immediate execution, by simply stating, "a law point arose between

him and his brother Judges, connected with the absence of Mr. Fitzgerald from the trial, whom the Chief Justice considered an important witness, in the prisoner's favour."

When pressed on the subject, the Chief Baron abruptly "declined interfering until the opinion of the Twelve Judges was taken."

To county gentlemen this was conclusive, and we strongly recommend the practice to future humane judges when the local power attempts to coerce them. With little dignity, and less feeling, the Chief Baron now placed the fatal cap upon his head; his colleague had deserted him that day to try some cases in the adjoining court; and it was expected his absence would remove any restraint over the coarse nature of this *bon vivant* judge in passing sentence on the criminal.

Mac Carthy wore much the same appearance as he did the preceding day; the pallid countenance of the old man was perhaps more haggard, more worn in ex-

pression; but there was the same firmness about the mouth, the same unbending, haughty glance from the eye—the same unsubdued determination pervading every feature, as characterised him then,—eyes that wept not for themselves in the same dock where he stood,—shed bitter tears *for him;* wives and mothers, who mourned around for those beloved ones, transported to a distant land—smote their breasts in agony *for him.* Still Mac Carthy More gave way not for an instant, the pride of ancestral dignity sat upon his brow—steeled his heart against the gush of human feeling; and in that hour of mortal agony, braving a felon's doom, he stood an unshivered wreck of the royal stem, from which he sprung. Final sentence was pronounced; and that night Mac Carthy More—the last of a Milesian race—was to give up his life on the scaffold; and the old man stepped forth from the dock, with a tread as firm, as unshaken, as if his path led not

to the gallows, but to resume his sway midst the confiscated halls of his fathers.

Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, after a vain attempt that morning to move the Chief Baron to grant a reprieve, until the Lord Lieutenant's pleasure was known, threw himself into a travelling carriage, and took the road to Lisfinn, dispirited and weary ; on his return he found Gerald, just arrived, equally unsuccessful, after his rapid and anxious journey.

They both now talked over the matter as well as the sad issue of Mac Carthy and Sweeney's sad trials. And Gerald, much shocked, ordered led horses to be sent on to the different stages to take him to Clonmel. He now perceived clearly the trap he had fallen into, in setting off to London a week before, and felt convinced that the letter he had received, summoning him there, and purporting to come from Amy O'Brien, entreating him to hasten to release her from the power of a wretch who was about sending her out of the

country for ever, was no more than a forgery of Major Power's to get him out of the way during the trials. This opinion was strengthened by a communication his grandfather had received, during his absence, from Sir Walter de Burgo.

This epistle, claiming the old knight's acquaintance in former days as Walter O'Brien, went on to state the great anxiety of the writer, respecting his daughter; and the change that had taken place in his mind and feelings as regarded her, since his return to his native land; deeply deploring the morbid sensibility that had kept him for so many years estranged from his child, still the unoffending object of his warmest affections, and finally enclosing Sir Maurice a letter of Major Power's, in reply to one he had addressed to the late Mr. Power, of Drumgar, enquiring after his daughter; but which to him was anything but satisfactory; and on the strength of their former friendship he took the liberty of asking the knight's

advice on the subject, and also any information he could afford him, relative to where his daughter now was, and the cause of her apparently unaccountable conduct.

This was the substance of Sir Walter's letter, and Gerald now perused it with intense interest. Major Power's, too, he read over and over again, but could arrive only at the same conclusion, that the Major was not as ignorant as he pretended to be of the fate of Amy. His epistle to Sir Walter was of the diplomatic kind. He largely set forth the uniform kindness and affection he had at all times evinced towards Amy, treating her always as a fond parent would a child of his own; but described her disposition as one on which kindness made no impression, gentle control had no influence; self-willed, obstinate, and opinionated, with the most grovelling ideas; always taking the part of the lower orders, which he feared led, in a great measure, to the painful catastrophe he was about to relate:

"for that on the night of the 28th of October, an armed party attacked his house and took her away, and that he, Major Power, verily believed with her own consent, and was since led to suppose that she was now in America, united to a very inferior person."

With a flushed brow and compressed lip, Gerald crushed this precious manuscript within his clenched hand.

"He is the father of poor, gentle Agnes," he at length said, as if replying to his own thoughts, "and that alone saves him from my well-merited vengeance; but nothing shall stand between me and him, until the perfidy of this foul letter is recanted."

A winter's night had set in dark and stormy, but still a single horseman might be seen making his way rapidly along one of the main roads that led to the town of Clonmel. The noble animal that bore him swiftly onward, seemed to hold no difference of opinion with his rider, but held on his way gallantly, at his fleetest speed,

apparently reckless, as his master, of the storm and sleet that swept across their course at intervals, threatening to impede the progress of the most fearless traveller. Neither horse nor rider however slackened rein, until the twinkling lights within the town appeared each moment more distinctly visible. The heavens had in some degree discharged their fury, and with the storm somewhat abated, this horsemen rode through the principal streets of the town, at a pace, moderate by comparison, but still sufficiently rapid to tell the bye-standers his errand brooked neither interruption or delay. As he pressed on in the direction of the main guard, a string of carriages apparently stopped by some accident, for a moment impeded his way, he turned his horse's head to pass them as he best could ; but ere he proceeded a few yards, found himself completely jammed in by a confused mass of vehicles, whose drivers' voices were heard above the storm vociferating for room to pass. In vain he tried

to back his horse out of this unforeseen obstacle, but ere he could accomplish so difficult a task, he heard his name loudly called on, in a female voice, from the depths of an adjacent hack carriage. A link boy's lamp had revealed him, and before he could retreat, the window of the carriage was down, and Mrs O'Brady's head, turban, plume and bugles, distinctly visible to the astonished gaze of the impounded horseman.

"Oh, Mr. Fitzgerald," she cried, "how fortunate that we should have met,"

Gerald thought otherwise, and the lady went on—

"Only think of our being stopped here for the last half-hour, expecting every moment an upset, and the ball opened long before this I am certain. The very moment I saw you, poor Jane was complaining how dreadfully nervous she always felt going into a well-filled room, particularly without a gentleman, and I do not know what would become of her to

night, this delay has made us so late, only we had the good luck to meet you so opportunely—of course you are bound, like ourselves to the Commission ball."

Gerald coldly replied he was not.

"Impossihle," cried Mrs. O'Brady and her two daughters, in the same breath. "The gayest and best attended ball that has been in the country for years. The officers of two regiments at least are expected. My girls have thought of nothing else for the last week, and it would be so pleasant if you would change your mind and come—plenty of partners I can promise you, for not a military man will show in the room until after this horrid execution is over."

At the risk of his own and his horse's neck, Gerald backed the noble brute he was on beyond the range of a tongue he devoutly hoped might never assail his ear again.

"Poor Corny," he bitterly ejaculated, as with some difficulty he made his way through the thronging crowd, "you de-

served a better fate than to lie in a dishonoured grave, whilst ignoble souls live on and revel midst a people's dying agonies."

The death bell toll struck mournfully on his ear, and with a saddened and foreboding heart, the young man spurred his horse on in the direction of the gaol. Here approach was nearly impossible; every avenue was choked up with military and police. The storm had lulled itself to rest, and as Gerald cast a hurried glance at the heavens he thought of MacCarthy's troubled life, his death struggle, and the repose that awaited him within a few hours, in the silent, unbroken slumbers of the tomb.

"He too will have rest," he murmured, "beyond the storm of public prejudice or private hate."

Hurriedly he dismounted, and for the first time remembered that he had outstripped the groom that had accompanied him that evening from Lisfinn. There were many

faces in the crowd from its neighbourhood, and to one of these, an honest looking countryman, Gerald flung his horse's rein, and made the best way he could amongst the crowd. Through its outer circle he found the task of proceeding not difficult, for it was principally composed of the lower class, and amongst them were many of Sir Maurice's tenantry, to whom the person of their future young landlord, was intimately known, so that his identity spread rapidly around, and with the intuitive tact of Paddy, in distinguishing his friends, way was immediately made for the heir of Lisfinn. The military barrier he found less obsequious; its extreme outer circle consisted of cavalry; the inner part of the array holding lighted torches at intervals, while their horse's flanks kept off, effectually, the pressure of the crowd from the infantry stationed in front; this force also held at stated distances, flambeaux whose red glare, like the well-managed lightning of an artist, threw prominently

forward the foreground of the picture, leaving the space beyond, by the very intenseness of its contrast, wrapped in deeper gloom.

The intervening circle between this strong military guard, and the place of execution, was filled up by frieze-coated men, among them were scattered numerous policemen in coloured clothes, the policy of the day graciously permitting an uninterrupted view of this one exhibitory amusement, for the moral edification and social improvement of the Tipperary peasantry, Under however, the wholesome restriction of civil surveillance, the *espionage* of a watchful government considered peculiarly salutary, during the unguarded moments of a mercurial people.

Gerald had much difficulty in making his way through these various obstacles; but there was something so earnest—so commanding, so not to be beat back—in the look and air of the young man, that neither sabre nor bayonet ventured to oppose him.

The stout iron gate of the gaol offered most resistance, as with nerves wound up to agony, he thundered for admittance. A surly turnkey, with all the insolence of petty office, abruptly and rudely refused.

Gerald bit his lip, and with the cool self-possession of a superior mind, demanded, haughtily, "his right to enter as a magistrate of the county."

The man eyed him for a moment, and then the gate was thrown widely open to admit him; apology after apology was tendered in the most submissive voice, deprecating his resentment; but a Geraldine was above paltry revenge. With a forced calmness in his tone, he asked "to be conducted to the governor of the gaol," and strode rapidly on after his now complaisant conductor. He found Mr. Benson slowly pacing up and down a corridor, pale and agitated, while a number of magistrates and some official personages, in the same gallery, congregated together in groups of three and four, conversing with very im-

portant faces, to each other in suppressed voices; without bestowing a glance at these parties, Gerald advanced to Mr Benson, and at once requested,

"An interview with the criminal about to suffer,"

"You are Mr. Fitzgerald, I presume," said the Governor, looking at him fixedly.

A bow of assent was Gerald's only reply.

"I suspected as much, sir, the moment I saw you," replied Mr. Benson "for the wretched man told me this day, that if you were living, you would see him before he died."

A choking sensation in Gerald's throat prevented his speaking at this moment, and the kind-hearted man went on—

"He will now die happy, sir; all he wished for was to see you in time. 'One look at the Geraldine before his sun was set.'"

Mr. Benson paused with some emotion, then, in a more collected voice, added,

"I have seen many a man go from these

walls to die, Mr. Fitzgerald, but never saw one like that old MacCarthy; they're mistaken when they think a torch-light hanging will frighten such as he; the man has the soul of a hero, and his fortitude in death will only dare others to brave the same fate."

Gerald fully assented, but his impatience to meet the criminal was too apparent to allow of Mr. Benson proceeding any further with the subject; he led the way to a small gothic door which opened at the further end of the corridor, into the prison chapel; and, after it was silently closed behind him, perceived by the lights that burnt on the altar, that Mac Carthy was engaged in, seemingly, deep devotion, kneeling on its steps; while two clergymen of his own faith, dressed in full canonicals, mingled their voices reverently with the last prayers of the criminal.

In breathless agony, the young man stood contemplating his old and attached follower. He was dressed in the same

garb he wore on the day of his trial, but his long, flowing hair was now powdered, giving a more unearthly character to the firm, composed expression of his pallid countenance.

The death-bell tolled mournfully, at intervals, a funereal chant to the muttered prayers of the suppliants at the altar, and Gerald with a beating heart, looked silently on; while the early days of his free boyhood came back in all their freshness, to contrast the gloom of that midnight chapel, with the bright, dreamy morning of his youth; when he who knelt beside the altar a doomed felon, with scarcely a step between him and a dishonoured grave, shared the sports of the idle school-boy, led his truant, wayward steps through rock and dell, and taught him the only lore he was master of—the lore a Geraldine loved best, the undying, imperishable records of his race, the tarnished glory of his native land, her transient splendour, and her long night of struggle and gloom. These "cling-

ing memories" saved a youth from party pollution—a manhood from venal crime—and Mac Carthy More, an enthusiastic Milesian, in the eyes of others, was to Gerald a spirit of his country evoking within him an unquenchable love for that degraded land. The principles of his family fixed him irrevocably in that devotion; but the glowing heart of the young Irishman never spurned the humble hand that ignited the patriotic flame within his breast; and deeply now did he feel, in all its bitterness, the social anarchy—the constituted misrule that transformed, with its withering blight, a heart, such as Mac.Carthy's, beating for his country's good—living on the past records of her greatness—into a sentenced conspirator, reckless, useless, perhaps worse amongst his fellow men.

"They who neglect the cultivation of such a people," was the secret whisper of his heart, "in the great day of account shall not stand guiltless of Ireland's crimes.

They taught yonder victim nothing better than the guidance of his own wild passions, outraged by oppression, and then left such as him to teach the rising youth of my country the same desperate and lawless lesson."

Gerald sighed deeply, and the object of his sorrowing thoughts raised himself suddenly from his kneeling posture, and cast a hurried and enquiring glance towards the spot where he stood. The young man advanced, and a gleam of joy shot across the criminal's face.

"My prayer is heard at last—Glory be to His Holy name!" he cried, fervently, as he bowed his head, and clasped the small crucifix he held between his closed hands devoutly to his breast. Gerald felt heart-stricken and sad at the old man's look of joyful recognition.

"I returned but to-day," he hoarsely muttered, "but in time, my faithful old Corny, to hear your last wishes, and to fulfil them to the letter."

"I never doubted you, Misther Gerald," said the criminal, earnestly, "Sir Maurice tould me what took you away from the trial," and, approaching closer to Gerald, he added in a lower voice, "it's ov *her* now I want to spake, in the few minnits that are left to me;" a deep colour overspread the pallid cheek of his astonished listener; Mac.Carthy seemed to have interpreted its meaning; for, turning towards his spiritual advisers, he supplicated a few moments alone—they retired silently towards the altar; and the old man rapidly went on. "I often tould ye when a boy," he cried enthusiastically, "that the fate ov the Geraldine was bound up in mine; you laughed then at my prophecy; but this night, Misther Gerald, 'ill prove my words true. Donald's race, an' the Fagarrald 'ill flourish when the last Mac.Carthy More is sthruck down by the Saxon!" Gerald would have interrupted him; but the old man impatiently waved his hand. "I saw my end long ago in the Halls of Lisfinn,'

he cried, wildly, "the noble youth, an' the proud maiden scorned not the poor schoolmaster's story, and their weird was shown to him, when he thought the long night over his own—Him, that laid the Mac.Carthy low by perjury, an' malice, can't touch them, the prophecy is aginst *him*—Mac.Carthy More dies not in vain. O'Brien's daughter must be the Lady of Lisfinn."

With an air of command, almost of defiance, did the old man make this announcement, such as a Druid bard might have worn dictating terms to some resistless power on whose destiny Fate had set its fiat. Gerald's deep breathing—his voiceless emotion, betrayed the intensity of his feelings at that moment; but he offered no interruption, and after a brief pause the criminal spoke again—

"My time now is but short, Misther Gerald, an' with my last breath I say to you what I often tould you before, never desert your counthry. When others make

a gain an' thraffic ov her people, let the Fagarrald stand in his place, an' spake up for um ; an' when Ireland gets fair play at last, then, and not till then, the last Mac Carthy More will rest quietly in his grave."

"Speak not of me, nor of your country now," interrupted Gerald, with an agitated voice, "but turn your thoughts, Corny, to a better world—and tell me, is there aught a Geraldine may do, to fulfil your last wishes in this."

The old man fixed his bright, penetrating eye on the face of the speaker, and with the ruling passion strong in death, emphatically replied—

"Let the Geraldine love his country, an' his people, an' then Mac Carthy More lived for something, an' dies content."

The chapel clock gave its solemn warning to twelve, and the criminal, startled by its sound, crossed himself with a look of deep contrition ; his ghostly advisers advanced to where he stood, but ere they joined

him, his last burst of earthly feeling was over; he had wrung the extended hand of Gerald, pressed it to his heart, and raised it to his lip, while an impassioned blessing for him and his, was supplicated on bended knee, from the God he now gave himself entirely up to; calmly and slowly he arose, raised the crucifix he carried immediately before his eyes, and without trusting himself with another glance at Gerald, joined in the low chaunted prayer in Latin, which the priests now commenced as they placed themselves at either side of the criminal, and solemnly moved forward, his eyes bent fixedly on the ground, while in a low but composed voice he joined in the prayers of his Church; at either side were drawn up in line the gentlemen, who, when waiting for the criminal to pass, had conversed in groups, but now unfeelingly gazed their fill, while some ventured remarks on his unmoved appearance; amongst the latter was Major Power, and *his* voice caused the criminal

to raise his eye for a moment ; the next, it was bent sternly on the ground, but in that short, involuntary glance was evoked a demon to stand beside old Jemmy Bourke's last look, in the Major's dying hour. Gerald would fain have shielded the condemned man from this paltry revenge, but the elder clergyman who attended him, previously whispered a wish that he should retire, lest his presence, at the dying moment, might distract the heavenward thoughts of their penitent. He now made the best of his way to the street, and found himself, after some delay, in the open air, with the cold night wind blowing freshly on his temples, and restoring, in some degree, the painful consciousness of what was passing around. The same glare of torch-light was there—the same military array—but the country people's anxiety seemed hushed into a breathless silence, as the criminal issued from the principal entrance of the goal. The two clergymen walked at either side of him, and the last officer of the law,

with the rope of office in hand, shrunk immediately behind the party, with the stealthy step of guilt—abhorrent guilt, as it was—to the conscience and feelings of so many of his fellow creatures present.

The gallows was erected in the centre of the area in front of the goal, round which the military and people formed a dense circle ; through these Gerald now attempted to pass, and shut from his eyes, if possible, the thrilling spectacle on which every other eye present was at this moment intensely bent.

Mac Carthy had ascended, unassisted, the platform with a firm step ; the executioner advanced to adjust the rope round his neck ; but from this thankless attention the old man drew back haughtily, and ere Gerald could escape, the firm, impressive voice of the doomed man was heard addressing the vast concourse of people that knelt, bare-headed, below.

"Pray for me, good people," were the first words audible, "an' tell far an' near,

that Mac Carthy More's last prayer was for ye all. I lave ye all that's left to me, my poor sinful body—let it be *keened* an' followed, as them that come afore me. May my precious, immortal sowl rest in pace," he added, solemnly, "my bones will, in Holy Cross Abbey, beside my father's grave."

A faint "Pray for me" issued from the gallows. The town clock struck twelve, and ere its last vibration ceased, the heart-sick groan of the praying multitude around told Gerald that all was over. He, too, had prayed with uncovered head and bended knee; but he dared not trust himself to càst a second glance at the quivering, agonised body of the humble attached friend of his youth, that hung in mortal suffering suspended before him.

The Commission closed—men's minds were differently affected. The landed interest augured well for the future by its well timed severity; and the lawless peasant folded his arms, and hung his

head with the dogged look of revenge—but not of despair.

The *corps dramatique* of justicial authority returned to head quarters, and to use the doggrel of a witty barrister of the day, the affair ended with the Attorney General's threat, of—

" I'll come again
But won't say when,
Unless you cease from deeds of slaughter.
" The boys " were tried—
Some of them died,
The rest were sent across the water.'

CHAPTER VI.

A YOUNG HEART'S SORROW.

THE hour was noon at the Castle of Lisfinn; in a large and luxuriously furnished apartment sat, or rather reclined on a low couch, a young and fair girl, dressed in the deepest mourning; the heavy crape folds of the dark robe she was attired in strongly contrasted with and set off a beauty that partook more of the lily than the rose; a winter sunbeam played through the light wavy curls that fell negligently around a face whose loveliness sorrow had touched but not destroyed, imparting a deeper hue

of golden to those sunny tresses; while it rendered more touching the subdued sadness that like a nipping blight in early Spring cast its shadow on that once bright joyous countenance ; now at intervals the long silken lashes of her deep blue eyes drooped and folded, as if shutting out external objects to hold unbroken communing with her own thoughts ; while ever and again she started from her recumbent posture, and looked fixedly around—then at the green swarded terrace beneath the window she gazed from, with its choice *parterre* of winter flowers, its shining ever-greens, its lifeless statuary—to banish, if possible, the startling thought that drove her back on these outward objects, as a momentary relief to the bitter memories that pressed so heavily on the wounded spirit within. The bright cheery sun, the million sparkles of dewy diamonds that basked in its rays, the richly planted demesne, the well-cared-for terrace—with its forest-like shrubs clad in winter's liveliest garb—the clear

bracing air of Spring's anticipated day failed in obliterating the past. That orphan girl turned from Nature to Nature's God; and, in the blue vaulted heaven above her, looked up for that peace, young as she was, a sad experience had taught her, earth could neither give nor take away; with a tranquillised brow and step, she crossed the apartment, and opening a door at its further end, calmly entered the adjoining room, and seating herself quietly at a table in its centre, addressed an elderly-looking person, busily engaged manufacturing woollen garments for sundry old women, pensioners on the bounty of her former mistress.

"I am come to assist you, Mrs. Donovan," said Agnes Power, "my idle mood is over for to-day. Somehow, I always feel happier working for others than thinking for myself."

"It's very thoughtful of you, Miss Power," returned the old housekeeper, respectfully; "but your nice delicate

fingers were never made for stitching up such coarse matters as these, miss, though my own poor dear mistress, that's in Heaven, always helped me at Christmas, and Easter, making them up, like yourself, Miss Power; she wasn't above doing a good action, and she now has her reward for it, where there's naither rich nor poor; no difference there anny way," she added, sorrowfully. "The poor man has the ear of the Judge in that court as well as his betters."

Agnes Power looked up in Mrs. Donovan's face; for, in the tone of her voice there was something of recent agitation, and large tears coursed silently down underneath the old woman's spectacles, as with bended head she busily plied her needle, stitching away most industriously at the charitable work with which she was occupied.

"What has happened, Mrs. Donovan?" enquired Agnes, anxiously. "No misfor-

tune, I hope, to either yourself, or any of your family."

And the young girl looked commiseratingly in the face of the old housekeeper. The question seemed, at once, to restore her composure, or, at least, caused an attempt to regain it, for she hastily assured Agnes, with a profusion of ceremonial thankfulness, "that nothing *partikler* was the matter; but that she had heard that day of the death of an old friend, and moreover, she was always low in herself at this time ov year, when her dear departed mistress used to be so busy cutting out an' working with her, for every poor body on the whole estate, that had naither a husband or son to airn an' work for them. And proud enough I used to be," added the old woman, more cheeringly, brightening up with her subject, "when the job was finished—and a heavy job it was though, as good as six young girls were kept working at the gowns and petticoats a month

before; but my poor dear lady, thought she never could do enough for the poor—an' Misther Gerald is the very model of his own sweet mother in that way—for though Sir Maurice, from the day of her death, ordered things for um as if she were in id, still my young masther, even in foreign parts, wasn't satisfied but to order for um too, an' send the money to myself, to find out them that wanted."

"In some things he is like his mother," remarked Agnes, musingly; "but in appearance, not at all—in that he is a complete counterpart of that picture hanging up beside his dear mother's in the next room."

The old housekeeper sighed heavily.

"*That* was his misfortune, Miss Power," she said, gravely. "My lady thought he should be like him in everything, when their look was the same; but he had the heart, from a boy, ov his true noble mother, an' she helped to break it on her

death-bed, when she mistook it for such an unsettled one as his father's."

Agnes looked with some curiosity at Mrs. Donovan, for this was a subject the old housekeeper had often alluded to before her, but when questioned, always declined explaining.

"Why do you say, Mrs. Donovan, that his father's heart was "unsettled," asked she, timidly.

"Ould women, miss, say manny a thing they oughtn't," was the cautious reply, "But poor Misther Gerald paid dearly anny way for his father's false step, though his own constancy, 'tis likely, will send him down, without wife, or child, to his grave."

This allusion to Gerald's attachment to Amy, and its mysterious disappointment, completely overcame the agitated spirits of Agnes. Mrs. Donovan threw by her work hastily, and went to her assistance.

"It is but a passing weakness, my kind old friend," said the fainting girl, looking

soothingly in the face of the frightened housekeeper, terrified at having unguardedly said anything to cause her illness.

"I shall be better in a moment, but the thought of the last night I parted from my own sweet Amy, always upsets me."

"Oh, miss, I shall never forgive myself," cried the old woman, bathing her temples profusely with *Eau de Cologne*, "nor Misther Gerald aither, after asking me airly enough to-day, to prepare you for seeing him, before Lady Glenmore comes to take you off to-morrow; an' purty preparation I made of it, sure enough, instead ov tryin' to amuse my poor suffering young lady; but while I kept from spaking ov what my own heart was sore about, I never dreamed ov doin' mischief." And the garrulous old dame paused to take breath.

"I am now quite over it," said Agnes, with some effort, "and shall be quite well by staying quiet in the next room for a

time ; you can tell your young master, Mrs. Donovan," she added, with some perturbation of manner, "that I shall see him before I leave Lisfinn."

The aged domestic curtsied profoundly, and Agnes, with an air of womanly dignity left the room.

"Poor young creature," muttered the old woman, again resuming her needlework, "now that she has no mamma to direct her, she has all the sense and caution of a lady double her years ; who'd ever have thought that such a nice, free, innocent child as she was, would all of a sudden have turned into a dark, distant young woman, that Sir Maurice himself couldn't persuade to stay one day longer from Lady Glenmore, than she wished herself."

Agnes Power was changed in every sense of the word, since the night of her mother's death; weeks of illness and sorrow had robbed her step of its elasticity, her cheek of its bloom ; but the horrors of that

night, the uncertain fate of her beloved Amy—the heartless neglect of her father, and the desolation of her own orphan state, changed the light, buoyant heart of girlhood into a new and painful sense of personal responsibility. The young heart had grown old in that brief period—its hidden thoughts were revealed—and with the instinctive delicacy of unhacknied feeling, shrunk from indulging, far less exposing to others, a weakness deemed unpardonable by itself. These different causes produced the one effect on the mind and manner of Agnes; to the former giving a tone of dignified feeling; whilst strongly tincturing the latter with an air of restraint and reserve. Sir Maurice early perceived both, but could not account for the change; the old knight attributed it at first to lowness of spirits, and the indifference and neglect with which she was treated by her father, and vainly endeavoured to induce him to visit her frequently at Lisfinn. The Major pleaded his sundry and many avocations in excuse,

and contented himself with paying one short visit to his daughter, when he assured her—"That Drumgar was not at all a fit place for her to return to; for besides its melancholy associations, he was just now so obnoxious to the Rockites for his great zeal and activity—that his child's life would be in the greatest danger residing with him—so that for the present he would accept, for her, Sir Maurice's kind invitation to remain at Lisfinn until her health was perfectly recruited."

With this, Agnes was obliged to be apparently content, but secretly very miserable; Sir Maurice next installed her in the favourite boudoir of his lamented daughter-in-law, with Mrs. Donovan as her constant attendant; but the reserve of Agnes rather increased than wore away; she vainly endeavoured to be more cheerful each succeeding morning, as the good knight paid her his daily visit, and reported his own and Gerald's unsuccessful efforts in tracing Amy; their hopes and fears; but before

the interview closed, Sir Maurice was sure to observe a shrinking on the part of Agnes from conversing freely with him on almost every subject he introduced—had he abstained, perhaps, from introducing Colonel Saville's name so often as he did on those occasions, Agnes might have been more companionable ; but as it was she looked herself, and made her unsuspecting host feel, something like very uncomfortable—Gerald he fain would have persuaded her to admit as a visitor at those times; but on this point, Agnes was from the first decisive—poor girl!—Some bitter tears were shed that night on her sleepless pillow ; for in excluding Gerald she debarred herself from the winning fascination of his constant companion and friend ; but Agnes stood alone, uncounselled by her sex's experience; and with the fluttered consciousness of her young heart's weakness, sought to secure its safety by unbroken absence, or precipitate flight. This feeling it was that induced her to accede at once gladly to Lady Glenmore's

kind offer, proffered through Sir Maurice, of taking the bereaved girl, for change of air, and scene along with her ladyship in a proposed visit to Bath, and the good old knight tried not to feel mortified at the alacrity with which his young favourite prepared for a sacrifice, only those who have parted from, voluntarily, 'the beloved one' of Spring's youth and sunshine, can, at all, properly estimate, or, indeed, comprehend.

Under these circumstances Agnes Power now awaited Gerald to say farewell, previous to her leaving the ensuing morning. She felt both embarrassed and distressed; and as the day wore swiftly away, her agitation increased at the near prospect of seeing, for the last time—for an indefinite period — the one connecting link with *him*, she dared not trust her own thoughts to dwell on; yet found it impossible to forget.

Gerald, too, half dreaded an interview, necessarily constrained on his part; for the health and happiness of Agnes, in her pre-

sent nervous, depressed state of mind and body, enjoined on him and all who approached her, a profound silence respecting the late fatal occurrence connected with her father's tenantry, as well as the execution of the poor schoolmaster; and the latter was so recent—so bitterly deplored by Gerald—that he mistrusted his own powers of dissimulation, in disguising, from Agnes, what weighed so heavily on his own mind. Slowly and sadly, then, he sought her apartment; pale, careworn, and thoughtful; but Agnes had expected as much; for the lover of Amy O'Brien would be unworthy of her—could he look aught else, while her fate was uncertain; but as she raised her eyes to his —as their hands met in that silent greeting—there was something so haggard—so troubled—so unrested—in Gerald's eye—look—and air—that an exclamation of sorrow and alarm broke involuntarily from the artless affectionate girl.

The young man, with some emotion seated himself beside her.

"You are still a sister to me in heart, Agnes," he said, affectionately, "though you have been cruel enough not to see me for so long a time; but now I must neither upbraid nor frighten you by my bad looks. I shall lose them after a good night's rest; last night I got none, for I left Clonmel at a late hour—" here his voice faltered for a moment—"and," he added, with a faint attempt at a sickly smile, "like all good travellers, I scorned to sleep after I arrived at my journey's end this morning."

There was much to talk about on either side, and, perhaps, it was that which caused so many silent lapses in the conversation of both.

Gerald spoke, however, first of what had occupied his own and Agnes's thoughts since the night they last parted; the mysterious and unaccountable fate of Amy; to discover whom, or to account, in any satis-

factory way, for her abduction, had hitherto proved utterly unavailing. He dared not trust himself to speak of his own suspicions respecting Major Power in the transaction ; but he told her that Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mandeville had been both applied to, to throw some light on the matter ; but that they both stoutly denied any knowledge whatsoever of Amy's being taken away the night they themselves had eloped; and Lucy, frightened at the thought of her " dear Frank' being brought into trouble, more than hinted that she herself had both contrived and consented to be run away with that night.

" Is it not like the hand of Fate, dear Agnes," cried Gerald, after talking much on the subject "that when the time approached to remove the one cruel obstacle to our union, a hidden power should step in to separate us for years—if not for ever."

Agnes raised her eyes to Gerald's and they speakingly asked an explanation, though her lips did not,

"You thought me wayward and fickle," he said, agitatedly, "so did Amy, but could either of you have read my heart, since I parted from *her* on earth," and he raised his eyes sadly to his mother's picture, "I should be forgiven by both, the bitter penalty of a child's obedience. I fain would have spared another; and tried to endure it silently myself;" he paused for a moment and then rapidly went on; "a parent's faults or crimes to their orphan child, are sacred, but to you, my heart-adopted sister, I would tell, in this, perhaps our last interview, what drove me from my home, a wanderer from the side of her I loved; in appearance, at least, a heartless miscreant. Look Agnes, at that picture before us: the curse of my life, was to resemble in form and face a father I never knew. The bane of his was to wed, when a boy, the noblest, the best, but the most mistaken of women. The admiration of a mere stripling she believed unshaken affection, and returned it with a love which outlived indifference,

neglect, desertion, in her inconstant husband. 'His errors—his 'crimes—brought him to an early death-bed, and his incomparable wife stood beside it—who can tell the remorse, the forgiveness of that interview! None now on earth, for the penitent husband and wronged wife sleep in one grave,"—Gerald sighed deeply—"but their only child was to be the victim," the young man added bitterly, "for a mother's dying mandate demanded a test of his constancy—a silent, unexplained parting with the being he loved in childhood and boyhood, lest a fickle manhood should entail on her the same misery that fell, by a father's caprice, to a mother's blighted, deserted lot. Agnes," he cried, in a broken, agitated voice, " yesterday disenthralled me from my vow of silence; but, oh God! how did the last night of my five-and twentieth year close on me?" Gerald groaned at the recollection of MacCarthy's dying agonies, and Agnes, deeply moved, with gentle kindness, tried to soothe him

by speaking cheeringly of the future.

"Sorrow has made me selfish, dear, kind, good Agnes," he said gratefully, taking her small, fragile hand, and pressing it kindly between his own; or I should have talked before this, my sweet prophetess, of that bright future you would persuade me to anticipate; tell me, witch as thou art," he said in a voice struggling to be gay, "what does it portend for the—fair lady's precious self?"

It was then Agnes' turn to be agitated; the hand that before lay passive in his friendly pressure, was instantly withdrawn, and with an averted cheek, she hurriedly cried—

"A blank, Gerald—a mere blank. My happiness now must be reflected from yours, and dear Amy's. Alas! hope, and this world's sunshine fall not to my deserted lot."

Gerald gazed silently, with all a brother's love welling in his heart, on the fair, helpless, suffering being beside

him, as she sat with her face buried in both hands; while through the exquisitely formed fingers of the orphan girl trickled down tears of anguish for a fond mother's irreparable loss—and the cold, selfish indifference of a heartless father—that in her young heart's sorrow, consigned to others the care and comfort of his only child.

"Agnes, dear Agnes," Gerald whispered. "Life to you must not—cannot be a blank."

And he rose, and paced the room for a moment undecided. The next, Gerald was giving orders to Mrs. Donovan, in the adjoining room, requiring her presence elsewhere; whilst, with the door carefully closed between him and Agnes, his friend, Colonel Saville, was kneeling, as lovers will kneel, beside the weeping girl. How Charles Saville pleaded, we leave our readers to imagine; that it was not in vain might be inferred, from the deep glow on the fair cheek of the agitated,

conscious-looking girl, while the faint smile of returning happiness that played for a moment round her beautiful mouth, assured the gallant young soldier his temerity was forgiven—perhaps, more—approved of—when with the unstudied eloquence of a man's first love, he boldly sued for permission to ask leave of absence from his regiment—and liberty to make Bath his head-quarters for the ensuing spring.

CHAPTER VII.

A CAPTIVE.

GERALD warmly sympathized in the opening prospects of his friend; but a cloud hung over his own, which he found it impossible to penetrate—the dying belief of Mac Carthy in the rude prophecy familiar to himself from boyhood—was, perhaps, the only foundation, frail as it was, on which he ventured to build a hope; so true is it, that even the strongest minds cannot, in manhood, shake off the imbibed superstition of their childhood; and Gerald's early love for Amy O'Brien, gave a coloring of truth to the legend, taught him,

almost in infancy, by the enthusiastic old man, remembered, and cherished, when other nursery rhymes were forgotten; and all but confirmed was the *fate* of *Lisfinn*, to its heir, when he witnessed the night before the judicial execution of "the last of the race that burnt it first." Still, though happiness glimmered in the future horizon of Gerald—no present clue appeared to guide him, except what information on the subject he might be able to extort from the wily Major; and until Agnes had another home beside his grandfather's, he felt a repugnance, his impatience to find Amy scarcely overcame, in bringing Major Power to that account, which he inwardly determined should be decisive, at the very time his daughter was an esteemed guest within his own halls. The coming morrow, when she left them to accompany Lady Glenmore to Bath, the young man looked forward to as the utmost limit to his hospitable forbearance; and deeply did he feel his disappointment,

dearly as he prized Agnes, when a message from her Ladyship arrived, to say a few days must intervene before she would be able to call, *en route*, for Agnes at Lisfinn. Gerald sat down, and wrote a calm and polite note to Major Power, requesting an immediate interview. His messenger returned, without being able to reach Drumgar, with a confused and unconnected account of "a general rising" of the country people for many miles round, headed by Corny Mac.Carthy, alive or dead, (informant could not satisfactorily ascertain which), to pull down—drag asunder, and destroy the Major, and the Major's residence, with his man Dan, and every living soul—friend or foe, soldier or police, that would dare to offer to protect him."

This exaggerated statement, Gerald and Sir Maurice concluded must have arisen from the public funeral of the poor schoolmaster, which by this hour was likely to have arrived in the neighbourhood of Drum-

gar, on its way to Mac.Carthy's final resting-place; and Gerald had to bear another day of torturing suspense, ere he could obtain an interview with the Major, which that gentleman's cunning had led him long since to anticipate a request for—to be promised on his part, as a matter of course, but never to be granted, until his own views respecting the disposal of Amy were fully carried out. What these were a glimpse at the interior of a small, gloomy, comfortless-looking chamber, in a deserted wing of Drumgar House, will clearly indicate.

The apartment contained a bed, and a few articles of the plainest description of furniture, apparently more suited to the rank and condition of the miserable old crone that hovered over the scanty embers, that smouldered in the mean and niggardly-looking fire-place, than the noble-looking girl that paced to and fro the narrow limits of her dungeon room. Mental anxiety, as well as bodily privation, and the closest

confinement from almost light and air, had failed to rob her brow of dignity—though its sickly shadow might be traced in the faltering step, the sunken cheek, the deadly pallor that overspread the still beautiful, but almost death-like countenance of Amy O'Brien. She spoke in broken sentences at intervals ; but the language was addressed to herself; and the decrepid-looking being, to whose society for companionship she was degraded, seemed to catch the meaning of her unconnected words more by a cat-like watchfulness of the mouth of the speaker, than the low uncertain sounds that were scarcely audible to the wretched girl herself ; stealthily the old hag glowered at her victim, with eyes whose malicious cunning only surpassed their brightness ; but Amy's thoughts were far away, and Bothered Nell's presence or absence now was, to her, a matter of comparative indifference. She believed herself dying; and, young as she was, her dream of human happiness was over, the approaches of the

grim tyrant was to her a release. The body had suffered much by the relentless order of her cruel, systematic tyrant; but the hand-cuff or the fetter failed to subdue, until the lever of his malice, was brought to bear on her mind. Her jaileress greeted her one morning by displaying before her, with much ostentation, the bridal favours sent to the servants of Drumgar, by their former young mistress, now the the *lady of Lisfinn.*

Amy, after she was brought back the same night she had encountered Gerald in the hut of Bothered Nell, fully acquitted her lover of having taken any part in the tranactions of that evening; though his sudden and unexpected presence in the miserable cabin was to her wholly unaccountable; yet that he should have engaged persons to bring her there, and then hand her over as a prisoner, to the wretched old hag she was consigned to, was so utterly at variance with her previous knowledge of him, as to reject it at once as impossible; then, when

she reflected on his manner and words during that interview, though they seemed, the more she dwelt on them, the more inexplicable, still the soothing and cherished impression remained on her own mind, that she was still loved. This one consoling thought, had hitherto supported Amy during the very tedious hours of her dreary, monotonous confinement. 'Twas it that nerved her to bear, with equanimity, the unprovoked malice that shut her up, as if in a living tomb, with no other companion but the demon-like being who watched her by day and night so narrowly as to render escape hopeless. Still, to accomplish it, Amy bore, up, and submitted, with a patience that astonished herself, to the restrictions imposed on her by the never-sleeping Argus who guarded her so closely; and from whom she could not, by the largest bribe she could offer, discover the cause of her detention, or why it was she was so narrowly watched and so heavily ironed lest she should attempt to escape. In vain

she implored an interview with her uncle; in vain she tried, with all the eloquence of despair, to move the obdurate heart of Bothered Nell, to convey a message to her aunt and cousin; of the former's death, she was unconscious, or the absence of the latter from Drumgar; and when all other arguments failed, the deserted girl with a crimsoned cheek, besought her inhuman jaileress to convey the only ring she wore (it was her mother's) to the Castle of Lisfinn, and say, "its owner was a prisoner in the house of Drumgar."

"My ability to reward you, old woman, you may doubt," added Amy proudly, "but the bounty of a Fitzgerald is above suspicion."

This conversation, faithfully reported to Major Power, caused the exhibition of his daughter's pretended bridal favors, a few mornings after, in the chamber of her cousin. From that hour Amy sank; the stimulus to attain freedom was removed; the sister of her heart, the *confidante* of

her devoted, disappointed affection, was the wife of the man on whose faithfulness and truth she had lived, hoped, endured so much; she was now basely deserted for another, and that other, her early and best friend; restraint or severity was no longer necessary, in subduing the unhappy prisoner to unquestioned submission to her fate. She neither sought nor wished to escape; and Bothered Nell was too observant not quickly to perceive the change. The irons that confined her hands and feet were removed; the door was less strictly closed and guarded than before; nor was each one in its vicinity shut to so carefully, lest the the prisoner's screams might discover to the unconscious domestics, that their master's niece was a close prisoner, in a deserted wing of the same house. Indeed, had they even reached them, such were the Major's habits of secresy, and so heavily did he visit, with his displeasure, all those who might pry into them, that no remark was likely to be made on the circumstance;

particularly as it was understood in the household, and by the party of police retained there to guard it, that a witness, whose evidence was of vital importance, was secreted in that part of the house whose presence was neither to be intruded on, nor whose residence there was to cause the slightest observation. Without any dread then, of discovery, did Bothered Nell relax her extreme watchfulness of her prisoner; and as the Major had returned, at an early hour, that morning from Clonmel, under a strong escort of dragoons, accompanied by the old lady's son and grandson, there no longer existed the same necessity for precaution, as when the entire responsibility of guarding Amy, rested on herself; besides all this, the health of her prisoner was failing fast, and though her death might meet the Major's wishes, still it would not, in the remotest degree, benefit Barney, or Barney's grandame.

"The *waste* is on her," thought she to herself, as she watched the broken-hearted

girl pace, with a faltering unequal step, the confined space of her cheerless prison ; "she'll nivir hould out to have the words said over her an' Barney; an' thin, he may look to the Major in my eye for all he'll get by *stagging*."

Acting on these reflections, the cunning old dame addressed Amy in a voice of kindness she had never before assumed, but its tone of hollow heartlessness recalled, to consciousness, the wandering thoughts of the unhappy girl, whilst a painful dread of impending evil, worse than she had yet experienced, stole across her mind ; for in the falsity of Bothered Nell's tones, was an index to future evil, at which her heart involuntarily shuddered.

"I often tould you, miss, there was luck afore ye," said the old hag, eyeing her victim, with a look meant to be encouraging, "an' now, I'm thinkin' you'll soon see yoursilf, who was right. There's a fine forthin' across the *say* waitin' for you,

an' the very broth ov a likely boy, an' a good husband."

Ill in mind and body, as Amy was at that moment, this flattering address of her companion aroused feelings of indignation within her she found it impossible to express; she contented herself therefore with bestowing only a look of abhorence and contempt at her insulter.

"Yet why blame such a miserable wretch as that?" thought Amy, to herself, "Ignorance and Vice are her teachers—Great God! is it possible that he, who bears my mother's name, should inflict on her child the misery and horror of such a death-bed?"

With a feeling of helpless anguish, the dying girl sank almost insensible on the comfortless mattress of her prison-bed. Life to her was insupportable; for those she loved and trusted had repaid her with indifference and desertion—and the natural protector of her orphanhood was, to her, only the bitterest foe. Still to pass from

time to Eternity, cut off from all human sympathy, save the mocking fiend's consolation, that crouched before her, was to quaff the bitter cup of sinking mortality to the very dregs. In hopeless despair then, Amy closed her eyes ; but her companion, frightened at the ghastly hue that overspread her emaciated features, aroused her from a death-like trance, by forcing some water through her pallid lips, and in a voice of dismay, entreated "She would come into the next room for a mouthful of air."

The time was past when this request would have been hailed by Amy as a boon from Heaven, to be received with joy and gladness. Sickness and suffering scarcely now permitted her to heed it.

"Oh, no!" she murmured. "Mercy now comes too late."

Alas! how many dying wretches have attained the goal of their human wishes on the very brink of a closing grave, and Amy was doomed now to experience the feeling, in all its bitterness, when the door to free-

dom and liberty was so unexpectedly opened to her, without either the power or the will to avail herself of what before she so earnestly coveted, the slightest circumstance to favour her escape. It was only after much entreaty that she attempted, slowly, to pass over, for the first time, the threshold of her prison. It opened into a narrow dark chamber, containing the pallet, on which her Cerberus slept, whenever she gave slumber to her restless, all-seeing eyes, which only was indulged in when she found her charge had sunk into oblivion.

From this room, Amy's conductress led the way to a corridor, or sort of gallery, whose further end terminated in a door secured by a stout lock; a window, of larger dimensions than lighted either of the smaller rooms, was placed in the centre of this passage; but it, like them, was barred with iron, and looked out on the same aspect of the house; a thickly planted shrubbery, a circumstance not at first per-

ceived by Amy, but as a freer current of air played round the exhausted girl, her spirits gradually revived, and it was with a feeling of thankfulness she enjoyed this temporary respite, from the confined and almost fœtid air of the closely shut-up chamber of her narrow prison. Through the upper boughs of the leafless trees she now looked out on, Amy perceived a vast concourse of people moving through the winding turnings of the principal entrance, a casual, and partial view of which was caught from the back window, against whose frame-work she now leaned for support. Eagerly did she gaze on those vistas, the faintest glimpse of her fellow creatures reviving hopes of liberty, she thought, a few moments before extinguished for ever; but that glorious impulse within us, implanted by the hand of Omnipotence, never can be totally obliterated from the meanest fraction of fallen humanity; and in the free-born heart of a noble nature such as Amy's, however, the feeling

might lie dormant, it could only expire in the still cold sleep of death, to be awakened for ever on the morning of an endless eternity. Her companion had retreated to the inner chamber to indulge in her favorite recreation, an uninterrupted *smoke*, and Amy, feeling considerably relieved by her absence, as well as the prospect of being able to catch a glimpse of some one she might know in that vast crowd, the noise of whose approach was now heard distinctly by the agitated girl, strained eye and ear with the fluttered hope of being recognised by those below; but alas! the window she looked from, was too well planted out, and too far removed from any avenue, or passage whatsoever, to afford the slightest probability of being seen. Bothered Nell, too, was again at her side; and with a heart-sick sigh of disappointment, the wretched prisoner turned from the window. The watchful curiosity of her guard was excited; she looked out in the same direction she found Amy so intently gazing

on ; and her scream of terror informed the gasping captive that the old hag's fears were at length aroused. With a shriek almost of dismay, she flew towards the firmly locked door, at the end of the passage ; and with seemingly only presence of mind left sufficient to accomplish her purpose of flight, produced a key, and unlocked it with the same desperate haste, with which she first retreated, from the window. The astonished Amy gazed at the open door, paralysed for a moment by this sudden and unexpected prospect of escape. Her trembling limbs scarcely supported the faint, sick girl ; but the unconquerable impulse to regain her liberty, nerved her heart and winged her steps for flight, with a rapidity that terrified herself even more than it, amazed she fled through the open door : her jaileress impeded her not. She was then flying more rapidly than her prisoner. The unmistakeable noise of a vast multitude in motion, was heard each moment more dis-

tinctly by Amy, as she approached the apartments that led to the main front of the house, without design or purpose, but to throw herself, for protection, on the mercy of a mob of whose object she was not even aware. Her fast sinking strength refused to carry her any further; she caught by the ballustrade of the staircase she was descending for support, and lifted eye and heart to heaven for strength and succour, ere human weakness failed her. The wail of a thousand voices rose simultaneously, as if beneath the very spot on which the startled but undaunted girl stood. It was a people's cry of heart-rending lament—an Irish howl over their kindred dead. To Amy O'Brien it sounded as a friendly cheer, to lead her on to liberty, and without a pause for rest or consideration, she burst open the first door she reached on the landing of the staircase, and tottering with all her remaining strength towards the window of the apartment, sunk completely exhausted on its vacant seat. There lay outside enough to freeze the senses of the

fainting girl; but the very horrors of the view shocked Amy's shattered nerves too much, to lose all consciousness at that moment, in the friendly relief of a fit of insensibility. The disfigured corse of Corny MacCarthy, coffined, but uncovered, was placed in the centre of a low-backed car of the country, immediately below the window she looked out from. The face was blackened and distorted, the hair smooth and powdered, as when he suffered, fearfully contrasting the discolored and agonised visage ; the blackened tongue protruded, lolled out, as if with derisive malice, outside the window of Major Power's study, to bring home to him, with an eloquence that was beyond all living language to convey, "that the schoolmaster's death was laid by public opinion at his door." At the head of the body sat Mrs. Dooly; at the feet mourned Biddy Sweeney. Both women sang the *Coronach* of his family over the last MacCarthy More ; and ten thousand voices echoed back that wild cry. Every hamlet and village they had

passed through swelled the monster funeral into an armed phalanx of desperate and infuriated men, to oppose whom would be idle, by any force that the country contained, called into action so suddenly. Drumgar was their first halting place, and for many miles in extent the road they travelled was impeded by the calm, sullen-looking mass of human beings, that journeyed on, outwardly peaceable, but requiring only one word from their leaders to wreak their smothered fury and vengeance on the heads of men they considered as the relentless persecutors of their own oppressed and suffering class.

It was the people's turn to speak and Major Power's to listen that day inside the closed and well secured shutters of his study window, at the side of which a loop-hole, ingeniously placed so as to fire at an attacking foe, now afforded, to its contriver, the gratifying spectacle of his victim's insensible and dishonoured remains; whilst, without query or reply, he heard

recounted of himself, by Mrs. Dooly, with all the fervid sarcasm of an Irish *keener;* deeds of darkness and double-dealing, of falsehood and oppression, of tyranny and meanness that caused his bloodless cheek to crimson at its own vileness, with no other eyes but those of his own infamous tools, to sneer a mocking assent to the faithful picture.

Barney Maher, paid murderer as he was, —perjured informer as he had been, regarded, at that moment, his base employer but as a worthless craven, below contempt; and Barney's father did not require a *keener's* eloquence to confirm him in the same opinion.

But suddenly the strain was interrupted; for a scream of joy came from a voice familiar to them all. Major Power's eye was to the *look out* in an instant. Biddy Sweeney still continued that glad cry, and her frenzied gaze was bent intently on the window of the room above where he stood.

Major Power saw no more; he muttered a deep curse against Bothered Nell, and with a look of cowardly despair at his companions, fell nearly insensible into the next chair. What recked it then, that he had that morning triumphantly returned, boastfully enumerating the success of his different prosecutions at the late Commission—hanged one of his neighbours, sentenced to death a ruined tenant, and ejected, by transportation, the refractory ones of a whole townland; plotted, planned, and all but executed the heartless sacrifice of an unoffending, unprotected being, one of his own race and lineage, into the cruel custody of a public miscreant, a hired assassin, to marry or murder, which ever might best suit his savage humour? What, then was it to him, that he had been caressed and flattered, eulogised by the first and leading men of the county for his zeal, activity, public usefulness, in suppressing and prosecuting crime, when the carelessness of a crazed old woman laid him, his

successes, his plots, and his laurels in the dust, by popular fury!

But a misconstrued wave of Amy O'Brien's hand in answer to her faithful Biddy's recognitory scream, saved the Major, as many such trivial interventions have saved military heroes before, from almost certain destruction, by causing the car to move off immediately, with its live and dead burdens, from before the eyes of the miserable Amy; who now, with the energy of despair, attempted to fling up the sash of the window, and call for rescue and assistance from the crowd below; a suppressed voice behind her, immediately arrested her hand.

It was that of Barney Maher, who stood at some paces advanced from the door with a cocked pistol in his hand, deliberately aimed at the agitated and exhausted girl.

"Sit down, Miss," he said in a cool, taunting tone, "or this very minnit, is ye'er last."

No further threat was necessary, for the murderer's eye accomplished what physical weakness and recent horror had induced—Amy fainted.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEVEE DAY.

Towards the noon of a piercingly cold winter day, a young woman meanly and scantily clad, with a small bundle wrapped closely between her folded arms, underneath a thread-bare, much-worn cloak, that served to screen, but not to protect her wasted-looking form from the nipping air, presented herself at the door of a small provision shop in Lord Meath's liberties, and with much diffidence and hesitation of manner, humbly enquired of

the well-fed, good-humoured looking woman behind the counter,

"The shortest way to the Castle of Dublin?"

The woman addressed, stared for a moment at the enquirer, and then, with much drollery of manner, replied,

"To sell ye'er counthry, to be sure, my dear, that's the way most thravel to the Castle, that secure for themselves a good berth in id."

"It's the shortest road I mane, ma'am," said the young woman, mildly, "for it's a long wan I'm afther comin', an' my strength is'nt aiqual to much farther; besides, I'm but a sthranger in id, an' feerd ov losin' my way."

There was some thing so genuinely sad in the voice of the young woman, so apparently exhausted in her whole appearance, that the mirth of the good-natured mistress of the shop at once subsided.

"You do look tired an' wary enough, poor crathur," she said kindly, "an' may'be a

taste hungry, too, if the thruth was known. Sit down and rest ye'ersilf there *asthore*, on the heel ov that bag ov bran, an' tell us what takes the likes ov you to the Castle ov Dublin, while ye'er aitin a mouthful."

And the really charitable-minded woman broke the largest end off a brown loaf on the counter, and handed it across to the half famished looking being at the door.

Nature's cravings gleamed in the wistful, anxious, grasping look of unmistakeable hunger with which that young woman stretched forth her emaciated hand to clutch, with security, so unexpected a relief. She held it, however, unta-ted for a moment; for there was a stronger and more powerful feeling struggling within her own breast; decent shame and devout thankfulness, alike withheld her from raising so timely a succour to her famished lip.

"Oh, Father ov Heaven be praised for this an' all ye'er marcies to me an' mine," she cried, passionately. "To save *him* alone, you put it in the honest woman's

head to retch me this food, an' sure it's not for me, or the likes ov me, to be ashamed to ate id."

And Biddy Sweeney leaned against the door she stood at, and wept tears of grateful joy for a boon so unexpected.

"Poor crathur, it's aisily known you havn't much to be thankful for," said the woman of the shop, eyeing her commiseratingly, "when a crust ov brown bread makes you pray an' cry from ye'er heart. The Lord help the poor, anny way. It's not the sthreet beggar I pity; but a dacent body like you, young woman, that I'm sure seen betther days."

Biddy's heart was touched to the quick with deep gratitude; amidst tears and sobs, in broken sentences, the outline of her melancholy history was told to her compassionate benefactor.

"An' you walked the whole way up from Tipperary?" she cried, with amazement at its conclusion, "without wan penny in ye'er pocket, you an' ye'er poor *anyishore* of a

child. It's well for the poor, anny way, that God above us isn't as hard on um as the rich ov this world, or you'd never have seen Dublin ; an' little good, my dear, I fear you'll get by comin', for a sight ov the Lord Liftinant you'll never see, except it is mounted on his charger, with his *hedge-a-kongs* praucing about him."

This was to Biddy, the most disastrous news. She had borne up bravely against the privations of her journey, travelling by slow stages, some days scarcely tasting food ; the miserable huts that afforded her a night's lodging, with inhabitants too poor to bestow on the way-worn traveller more than a few potatoes, cheerfully deducted from the one meal of their half-satisfied family, often rejected by Biddy with the same delicacy of feeling that instigated the proferred hospitality. "For what was hunger for a day, when, may-be, the next stoppin' place wouldn't miss the dhry *praty* from themselves an' their childhre ;" but now to have heard, on her first arrival,

of this death-blow to her fondly cherished hope, of obtaining Martin's pardon, was too much for her exhausted, over-taxed mind and body.

With a cry of despair, the wretched woman sank down on the shop floor, nearly lifeless. The mistress of the shop came at once to her assistance, and loudly calling on the name of "Tommy," raised mother and child from the ground—the latter sleeping, unconsciously and unhurt, in its miserable parent's tightly clasped arms.

Tommy appeared, a pert-looking urchin, about fourteen years of age, and assisted his mother in placing the insensible woman on the half bag of bran at the door; they tried to withdraw the child from her almost death-like grasp; but found it impossible; so the mother supported Biddy, while her son Tommy ran fo: water. In a moment he was back again with a large jug full, and without enquiring how it was to be

applied, flung every drop of it in Biddy's face.

This mode of treatment had a two-fold effect, it caused Biddy to open her eyes, and Tommy's mother to bestow a sound box on his ear.

"I'll tache you not to wet every grain ov flour in the place," she cried, in a very suitable voice for enforcing a practical lesson. "Get out ov my sight, you wicked limb! this very minnit, or I'll make you repent comin' near me."

"Who was thinkin' ov comin' near you at all?" returned Tommy, in a defensive tone, still retreating towards the inner door of the shop. "Far enough I'd stay from you, only you kep' screechin' at me to come down."

This was literally true; for Tommy had a passion for mischief, which could always be indulged in with less personal inconvenience behind his mother's back than in her presence—but she now required his ser-

vices, and so revoked the order of banishment.

"Bring me the tay-pot, that's afore the fire," she cried, imperatively, "an' don't daare stir out wan inch to-day, until I bid you."

Tommy, with a smarting ear, dutifully obeyed the first command; but inwardly resolved to escape the latter the moment the parental eye was withdrawn. A warm cup of tea restored Biddy, in a great measure, and her humane entertainer tried to cheer her with hopes, "ov seein' the Lord Liftinant," that she herself scarcely entertained—anxiously enquiring, had she "anny letther or petition to present to his Excellency." Biddy had neither, "for them, that had the larnin' to write wan wor laid low;" and she silently prayed for the repose of Mac Carthy's soul; and bitterly thought over the hopelessness of accomplishing, what to her appeared a certainty, setting out on her journey so like, alas! the morning start of

life ; sanguine success speeding us on, yet every step attained in the earthly pilgrimage stripping—of its visionary ideality—the phantom hopes that lured us to the goal. Biddy still hoped against hope ; for the life and liberty of her husband hung on the thread of her own exertions and success. "If she could but get wan sight ov the Lord Liftinant, an' he'd listen but to the wan word, Martin might be saved ; for it was aginst law an' justice he was condemned, an' the counsel that defended him tould her the Lord Liftinant alone could pardon him afore the reprieve was out."

And on this hope Biddy had pinned her faith of success, without even supposing it an impracticability to obtain an interview with the greatest man in the kingdom. She was now to hear that "a chat with the Man in the Moon was just as aisy"—from Tommy's mother, while Tommy himself stoutly maintained, with his body half-protruded from the door of the inner-apartment, "that he'd bring the thravellin'

woman forenint the Lord Liftinant in ten minnits if his mother id let him out; for 'twas *levy* day, an' Alick Purtel, next doore, tould him, that the Lord Liftinant did nothin' but stand in the Castle-yard, talkin to all the people the whole mornin', an' had no more pride in him, an' far less than wan ov his own sarvints."

Alick was immediately summoned by Tommy's sceptical parent, and he confirmed her son's testimony as far as, "That it was levy day, an' that for all he knew to the conthrary, the Lord Liftinant was standin' in the castle-yard."

This was secondary, if not confirmatory evidence; and Biddy set out under the escort of Tommy, to "thry her luck at the castle," under a shower of good wishes from Tommy's mother, mixed with warnings to that young gentleman, not to stay out all day, nor attempt to *mitch* on the way coming home; while Biddy, with heartfelt thankfulness, poured out a blessing on the woman of the house, in Irish,

which certainly the English language could but faintly and coldly express.

Tommy kept a moderate pace by his companion's side as long as his mother's eye was on him; but as soon as she turned in from the door to resume her place behind the counter, he was far in advance of the flagging steps of Biddy. With a breathless dread of losing, in the crowd, this only clue left to guide her to the "Lord Liftinant," the wearied woman urged on to overtake him, but Tommy kept the *pace* at a full trot; and in the windings of the next street he was lost.

Biddy half hesitated whether to return to his mother or not; "but 'twould only be vexing the good woman; and her own wish to proceed was too vehement to permit delay; every one around her looked too much occupied with their own business, to afford a reasonable hope to the country-bred Biddy that they would stop to direct her; and she threw her eyes around, in search of some shop, where

she might, without the danger of a repulse, enquire it, just as Tommy twitched her cloak behind, and told her—

"He was only thryin' whether she'd go back to complain of him; but now that she didn't, he'd bring her every inch to the castle, where he was dyin' to go himself the whole mornin' to see the quality." They were now in Thomas Street, and continued to jog on together through the crowd; Tommy telling Biddy "To let nobody prevint her getting into the castle-yard, for to fight well was her only chance."

By the time they arrived at Cork Hill, a passage through the mob became problematical; but Tommy was an admirable pioneer on such an occasion, and succeeded, with considerable *tact*, in obtaining, for himself and his companion, a standing on the outer verge of the footpath, at the side of the principal approach to the castle; here he halted for the present, convinced of the eligibility of the situation for a ful

view of each party that entered the vice-regal gate, and the impossibility of making any further way, until there was some movement in the crowd.

In the meantime, courtiers moved slowly by ; each party subjected to the rude jest and pointed witticism of the shoeless squallid mob at either side, who if physically ill-fed, indulged to repletion at the expense of their betters, their mental appetite for sarcastic wit.

"Molly *avrone*, look who's coming," cried a toothless, shrivelled-looking fish-hag to a sister *artiste* in the crowd, with a face not unlike a dried ling. "How grand he sits in the open coach—he's a lord at the laist, or a giniral officer, barring the fayther."

"Bad cess to ye'er eye-sight, Judy *Asthrore*," returned Molly. "Where is id gone to, at all, at all, when ye take ould Thompson the pawnbroker for a gintleman ?"

And the mob shouted with laughter in

the face of the worthy alderman as he sat prominently and consequentially forward in a spic and span new open carriage, sworded and ruffled with the best.

"Thrue for you, Molly *agrah*," cried Judy, at the top of her voice; "whin my own bran new cloak, *mavrone*, is pawned on his shelf, this manny a day, sure. It's I have the good right to know him, if he wor biled, *ochoon, Machree*."

"Ain't he as good as the best ov um, now-a-days?' cried out Tommy, pertly; "who rimimbers seein' a raal live lord goin' to levy at the Castle ov Dublin? or a gintleman in the sthreet with his shoes clane."

"I do, you half starved sprat," cried Molly, fiercely, putting both arms a kimbo, and facing Tommy with a look of most ineffable contempt, "and that, too, afore ye'er mammy bound ye'er head; when, if a slate blew off a house in Dublin, 'twould light on a raal lord or lady's head—not to say they warn't to be found in the court ov

the Lord Liftinant, where the rubbish that gets in now would have their place, my good boy, in the kitchen. The sarvant's hall, in those days, *mavrone*, was far above um, an' three shoe-blacks to every sthreet widin the whole city."

"Oh, that was afore the Union," cried Tommy glibly, "when the sthreets wor paved with penny loaves, an' the houses thatched with pancakes."

A *fist*, as the fancy would call it, from Molly, aimed straight between Tommy's peepers, prevented this Young Ireland from finishing his description of the good old time, though it did not his making a sudden snatch at the lady's cap, which, with a very practiced hand, he tore at one pull literally asunder. Molly made for his eyes, while her friend Judy stuck her fangs in the boy's bare neck. Biddy, terrified and alarmed for his safety, with the remembrance of his mother's kindness still fresh on her mind, screamed out to the crowd to save him, and vainly attempted to appease the

amazonian ladies' vindictive fury; it had only the effect of turning their rage against herself, glad perhaps to relinquish a personal encounter with a wiry, active boy, kicking, thumping, and biting his very best. Biddy would fain have escaped this unmerited attack; but she was too closely hemmed in by the crowd; and the rag-a-muffins around, delighted at the prospect of a fight, cried out "for a ring." While Tommy shook himself free of their claws, and called out lustily—"Fair play was a jewel, that *his* friend should only box wan at a time—wan down, another come on, an' he'd give the long odds to anny man there, that he himself was a match for the conqueror."

"Done and done!" was echoed at every side, and Biddy, under a torrent of abuse from both viragoes, shed bitter tears of mingled terror and shame; her champion felt something like compunction; but his late antagonist, Judy, felt none; for, with a very effective jostle, she pushed

unfortunate Biddy off the flag way, so violently as to drive her into the very centre of the street, at the very moment a carriage, containing two gentlemen, approached the spot, where she was so unceremoniously flung. The driver pulled up, as a voice from the dickey shouted out—

"Biddy Sweeney, as I'm a livin' man—What upon heaven's airth, woman dear, brought you all the ways to Dublin's own city?"

"Oh, Nickey, jewel, is that you?" cried Biddy, in delighted amazement, turning towards her interrogator. "It's I that am in id, sure enough, to my sorrow. Come all the way to see the Lord Liftinant, God bless him! an' hav'n't got as much as a sight ov him yet."

"Drive on," shouted out Mr. Fogarty, the law adviser of the O'Brady family, whose carriage it was, that was thus momentarily stopped, while his companion, Mr. Nick O'Brady, thrust his head out of the opposite window, and gave a hurried

instruction to his own man, "Nickey the Nurse," perched behind in the dickey.

"Nothing like a full retinue at a levee," he thought to himself, as his merry eye twinkled, and stole a glance at the composed dignity with which the purse-proud Attorney resumed his studied attitude, and adjusted his court ruffles. "I owe you *that*, at least," he thought to himself, "for advancing me money at twenty-five per cent, and being hawked about by such a confounded prig into the bargain."

Nickey, in the meantime, held out a helping hand to Biddy; telling her "now she had a chance, in airnest, ov seeing the Lord Liftinant," and placed her in safety by his side, while his master, within, laughed immoderately as he thought of the figure the vain little Attorney's equipage would cut, lacqueyed after such a fashion, drawing up in the castle-yard, while another more ludicrous addition to the *cortege* was added, by Tommy's making a bold push to share his late companion's luck, insinua-

ting his wiry and supple body underneath the vehicle, clinging from the frame work that supported the dickey; and in this way, ingeniously winding his body underneath, was swept along to the interior of the castle-yard.

Nick O'Brady, at a glance, saw, on his arrival, this novel *attendant*, and would have drawn Mr. Fogarty's attention to his and Biddy's volunteer services on his carriage, even at the risk of dissolving their newly revived friendship, which caused the Attorney to advance money at twenty-five per cent to his client, to enable the said client to levee his Excellency into conferring on so loyal and meritorious a subject—a Commissioner's post at the least.

The chance of risking all this, would not have deterred "Misther Nick," did he not perceive his old acquaintance, Lieutenant Jennings, was the officer on guard; so, foregoing one piece of mischief to perpetrate another, he let Mr. Fogarty pass on

through the attendant *aide-de-camps*, without ruffling the little man by enlightening him as to the incongruous addenda to his equipage, and stepping up briskly to Mr. Jennings, formally introduced Biddy, and requested "that she should remain under the Lieutenant's care, until he had the honour of presenting her to his Excellency."

Poor Jennings felt nervously aware, that a practical jest was about to be attempted at his expense, particularly when he caught a look of recognition from his old upsetting friend, Nickey, who alighted from the dickey before the carriage drove off.

"I am a British Officer, sir," he said, with a look of becoming *hauteur*, and staring wickedly into the face of 'Misther Nick.' "Neither you nor any other man, sir, shall insult me with impunity."

Nickey thought to himself, could driving over a man properly be termed an insult, while his master, with a *falsetto* calmness in the tone of his voice, mildly

replied that he was quite aware of Mr. Jenning's profession, and as a soldier and an officer he called on him to take charge of a defenceless lady, and present her to the Lord Lieutenant.

Mr. Jennings eyed Biddy with a look of most ineffable scorn, and derisively repeated the epithet "Lady!"

"Sorrow taste of a lady about her," cried Tommy, with his usual flippancy, who had slipped off the carriage, and contrived to hide, until then, in the crowd of well-dressed loungers around. "She's nather more nor less than an idle thramper from wan town to another; sure my mammy fed her to-day for God's sake, grand as she is now."

And the spiteful urchin grinned at the bewildered Biddy, with the memory of her temporary exaltation above him, rankling in his breast.

"You lie, you young scoundrel," cried Nickey the Nurse, indignantly; bestowing a cuff at Tommy's head, that sent him

howling to some yards distance, "She came of as dacent a breed as anny in the three kingdoms."

Nick O'Brady, with mock earnestness, appealed, and argued with Mr. Jennings to afford his protection to the distressed lady, while that gentleman, losing all temper, swore vehemently—

"He'd knock his tormentor down, if he did not at once desist."

A gentleman had been attracted to the window above, by the unmusical cry of Tommy; and now appeared on the lower steps of the principal staircase, commanding the *aide-de-camp* to preserve order, and have the mob expelled outside. This at once procured a respite for Mr. Jennings, for Nick O'Brady joined a new arrival, and slipped up amongst them unnoticed, to make his *congé* above; while Tommy, forgetting his buffet, pushed by the guards, to get a full view, as he thought, of the "Lord Liftinant himsilf."

The quick, dark eye of the soldierly

looking man he so audaciously pressed forward to gaze on, at once distinguished the mischievous urchin, and pointing him out to an attendant in waiting, Tommy was at once seized on; but louder than ever, with the prospect of spending a night in a Black Hole, he called out to be heard, and vociferously denounced Biddy, in a plea of defence, as "a thramper of the worst sort."

By this time he was dragged to the door of entrance, and Nickey, the Nurse, stepped briskly forward, to assist in his expulsion.

"'Tis a confounded lie for you," he cried, shaking him well. "I knew her since I knew annybody, an honest, dacent girl, an' kind mother for her, for she was nurse Mooney's daaghther, from the cross roads of Dhrumgar."

The gentleman on the stair-case, hastily descended, and in an agitated tone of command, demanded of Nickey,

"Where was the woman he called nurse Mooney's daughter."

Utterly astonished at the enquiry, the fosterer lost his usual presence of mind, and stammered out something between apology and regret that were wholly unintelligible to the Chief Secretary.

Biddy had hitherto stood outside, a silent, shivering spectator of the scene, endeavouring with motherly kindness to protect her *faerie boy* from the keen, winter breeze, underneath the scanty shelter of her tattered cloak, a seemingly passive, but deeply observant looker on at all that passed around, her whole mind fixed with an intensity of thought on one object, that excluded all others, to crave her husband's life, if possible.

"Could she but get wan sight ov the Lord Liftinant."

To hear her own name now enquired after by this distinguished personage, as she supposed, roused all the remaining

energies of Biddy's nature, while Nickey hesitated, and blundered out he knew not what, the devoted wife had flung herself on her knees.

"I'm the woman my lord," she cried, "the only wan that was left out ov five childhre to Nurse Mooney, an' a wake broken-hearted crathur I am, my Lord—notfit to appear afore ye'er Highness' Lordship; but I come to ax my husband's life at ye'er hands, my Lord, he's condimned but not executed, an' never in his whole born days, my lord, did hurt or harum to rich or poor, 'till our landlord riz up aginst us, my Lord, an' then ye'er Highness's Lordship knows there was no chance for the poor man at all, at all."

"You are Nurse Mooney's daughter?" interrupted the Chief Secretary, bestowing a most searching glance into Biddy's face.

"The very same person, my Lord," cried Biddy, with great simplicity of manner, "'twas my mother, my own born

mother, my Lord, nursed Miss Amy O'Brien—God bless her! an' her mother afore her nursed, an'—"

"Take this woman away," abruptly interrupted the Chief Secretary, turning to an attendant. The rest of the sentence was uttered so low, as only to be heard by the person addressed—Biddy was almost immediately hurried into a small vacant room, where she was left with the door carefully closed for some moments alone; lost in amazement at all that had past. At length, however, the handle of the door cautiously turned, and the next moment Nickey the Nurse's eyes appeared at the partially opened door, peeping in.

"Oh, but, Biddy *asthore*, 'tis I'm glad I found you," he said, good-naturedly, at the same time slipping into the room, and closing the door cautiously and noiselessly behind him. "I watched where they put you, an' when I seen their eyes off I crept down the passage for all the world like a thief; for it bates Banagher *aroon*, the

Sacratory of State, knowin' so well who ye'er mammy was—"

"He wasn't the Lord Liftinant then?" said Biddy, anxiously.

"No!" returned Nickey, "myself thought he was at first, the *Hedge-a-Kongs* all looked so afeered ov him; but it turns out he's only the man that writes the letthers for him."

Biddy's countenance fell at once to a dead blank; she had not seen the "Lord Liftinant," and Martin's reprieve might be out before she would. Nickey tried to cheer her, in vain, by telling her "the wan roof was over herself an' his Excellency now, an' sure she had a friend at Coort, if the Sacratory didn't shut her up there, to pump out ov her something aginst "the boys" down in the counthry; but that if he did, she might as well, an' hould her tongue as ax for Martin's life, unless she *stagged* first."

Biddy looked earnestly at her companion, and then, sorrowfully replied,

"I haven't much to tell ov um, Nickey, but, small as it is, a hair of their heads never shall be touched through me; no, I'd die first, an' worse than that, see Martin die before me. God help an' convart the poor crathurs. they're often dhriven to the night-walkin' an' bad work by their betthers, an' I thought, Nickey, you'd be the last man goin' that id timpt a poor, disthracted woman like me to ruin a nabur, tho' it was to save from the gallows all I cared for in the world."

"Give us the hand, Biddy," cried, Nickey, exultingly, "your'e thrue blue anny way, an' I desarve to be hung myself for doubting you; an' now, I'll make a clane breast *asthore,* ov what I ought to have proved in Coort, long ago. The Major's pistols that were found in the thatch ov your cabin, Biddy, wor left wid my own two hands the night afther I took um from

him, on the sate ov his own study window at Dhrumgar."

Biddy uplifted her hands and eyes to Heaven.

"'Tis as thrue as ye'er standin' there," continued Nickey, "and I'd have tould it long ago, bud *him* I'm bound to sarve, forbid me, an' tould me 'twould be ov no sarvice to Martin on the thrial; but now, Biddy, thry what you can make out ov id. 'Tis clear as noon-day, that the Major or Dan put the pistols in the thatch, for I seen um in the Major's own hand, the mornin' afther I left um on the windy-sate. Tell this now, an' welkim, for my conscience 'ill be all the lighter for id, an' sure if the Lord Liftenant is a rasonable man he'll judge that the Major's and Dan's false-swearin' an' bad thratement dhrove Martin into what he'd never have thought of, if they left him quiet an' comfortable in his own dacent cabin."

This was tracing the effect to the cause, but whether his Excellency would have

taken the same view of the subject, if it came before him, we cannot say; his Chief Secretary had an opportunity of judging, for, in the midst of Nickey's conclusive reasoning, he made his appearance in the room.

His first question to Biddy, was, as to whether her companion "could be trusted."

Unhesitatingly, Biddy vouched for his fidelity. The Chief Secretary then strictly examnied her as to her personal knowledge of Miss Amy O'Brien. Biddy's answers were perfectly satisfactory, until the night of Miss O'Brien's abduction was alluded to, and then a warning look from Nickey embarrassed her considerably. The Chief Secretary pressed hard, as to where it was supposed Miss O'Brien was, at present, concealed, overlooking, to Nickey's great delight and surprise, to enquire into the cause of her abduction, confining himself entirely in discovering how long since Biddy had seen her—where and under what circumstances. Biddy shook her head sorrowfully ; and, with much *naïvete* of

manner, acknowledged "that, on a sartin day, she had seen Miss Amy in a windy in Dhrumgar House, when they brought Corny Mac Carthy to *keen* him at the Major's hall-doore, an' that but half herself was in id that day; she looked so worn away, an' frightened, an' vexed, too, at seein' herself (Biddy) among the people, for she made a motion ov her hand, that ordhered her out ov Miss Amy's sight in wan minnit, which ever since lay heavy enough on her own heart, for she loved an' respicted the very print ov Miss Amy's footsteps on the blessed *airth.*"

The Chief Secretary took a rapid turn through the room, and Biddy thought it a good opportunity to speak in Martin's favor; abruptly he stopped her, by saying,

"You want to save your husband's life, good woman—the best way to accomplish that, is, perhaps, to obey me implicitly. You must see Miss O'Brien again, and that before another day passes over; but you must do it secretly, for she is a prisoner at Drumgar;

a person of your appearance approaching the house will not be noticed; see her if possible, and, at all hazards, lie concealed outside. to see if they will attempt to take her thence."

He paused, then, with some fire of manner, added,

"You are a Mooney; your family have served her's for generations, so I shall say nothing of a reward; but meet me to-morrow at Lisfinn Castle, at four o'clock, to say my—" He stopped suddenly, then added, in a more collected voice—"*She* is safe, and your request shall, indeed, be unreasonable, when it is refused by Sir Walter De Burgo."

Biddy, with all the devotion of her country and her mother's house, promised to do her best.

"But she was as good as three days comin' up, an' got manny a lift on the road."

"And could not walk down to Drumgar in one night," interrupted Sir Walter;

"poor woman, I did not intend that; this man seems to be friendly to you—he must arrange to transport you there with as little observation as possible; but mind you leave Dublin at once; this will defray your expenses—" And he emptied his purse into Biddy's hand. "I do not doubt your zeal or your sincerity, for you have your mother's face—but I do procrastination—the curse of Ireland."

Neither Biddy or her companion had ever heard of this curse before; but both were eloquent in expressing their readiness to depart the *next minnit*.

Sir Walter touched the bell pull, and a servant in attendance appeared at a door, but not the one Biddy entered at, in a language new to either her or Nickey, Sir Walter addressed him, and slowly pronouncing the word "remember," as he cast an impressive glance towards Biddy vanished from the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EPISODE.

SINCE the fatal night of the 28th. of October, Nick O'Brady, had made Dublin his head quarters ; his mother's threat of resigning him to the tender mercies of her solicitor (Mr. Fogarty), was by no means an idle one. Kilgroggy held out, under the command of Nickey the Nurse, (after his master's sudden flight,) against a host of bailiffs, until Mr. Davoren, the head clerk in Mr. Fogarty's office, was despatched

to reduce the garrison, and make good an entry into the besieged premises. Nickey, on the appearance of his wily foe, forgot his usual caution, and made a desperate sortie at the head of a party inside, organised by this faithful retainer to defeat the law, and baffle the "powers that be," at any risk. The head clerk was left for dead on the field, and Nickey, who never contemplated more than giving him a good thrashing, fled in dismay to Dublin, sorely discomfitted at so fatal a termination to the visit of Mr. Fogarty's confidential clerk. He found his master carrying on at a first-rate hotel in good style, dividing his mornings between a lounge at Dycer's, (the Tattersall's of Dublin,) and some stolen, but very delightful interviews, with the only daughter of his legal enemy; his evenings too were mostly devoted to this lady's service, for their flirtation had been of an old standing; but since open hostility was commenced by her father, in society, Nick O'Brady and Miss Fogarty met as stran-

gers, their only claim to acquaintanceship "The language of the eyes."

Nick's nights were devoted to a favourite study, in affording play to his scientific taste in handling with much skill and signal success, a cue, in a neighbouring billiard-room, occasionally varied with a game of Blind Hookey, that carried him on in a style utterly marvellous to himself; but Nick O'Brady was not a man to place implicit faith in the blind goddess. "Luck will turn," he repeated to himself, as he ran over in his own mind the most influential men on the list of his gambling acquaintance. A young Lord, with a monster rent roll, and no ready money, was the one he ultimately fixed on as best calculated to promote the object he had in view. From that hour Lord Denton and Nick were inseparables.

The young peer felt nothing but admiration for a man who seemed to possess the rare power of controlling fortune; and Nick O'Brady, with a modesty, that was

quite captivating, disclaimed any personal merit, and described the mystery of never wanting money, entirely, to the clever and judicious management of his finances, by his inestimable friend, Mr. Fogarty, the long-valued law agent, of the O'Brady property. About this time, Nickey the Nurse, made his appearance in Dublin, after treating the confidential clerk of the confidential family attorney, to "jistice," after the Irish fashion, and somewhat nervously reported the matter to his master; that gentleman was much less displeased than even the fosterer apprehended, he knew well enough that—

"Misther Nick would never grudge a good lickin' to the likes of Davoren," but that he should roar with laughter at hearing that he was drubbed to death, was more than Nickey ever reckoned on,

"*Beganays*, Misther Nick, if I knew 'twas that way you'd take id, they'd be a different story to tell; blow the information Davoren would be after makin',

he'd be quiet and civil by this, anny way; but there's no knowin' the quality afther all; wan time they'd thransport, or hang a boy for risin' a blow, but when it sarves their own turn, *mavrone crantha*, 'tis only a laughing matther with the best ov them."

This slander of his order only increased Nick O'Brady's mirth, which was participated in by Nickey, when he learned his master's plan of improving his fortune by the recent mishap of Mr. Davoren, by giving a first, and glowing version of the circumstance to Mr. Fogarty, threatening immediate proceedings against him and his clerk, for the illegal and unwarrantable attack of the latter, on his dwelling house, during his absence, when his servant had to defend himself, and his master's property from, as he supposed, a house-breaker; Mr. Davoren having refused declaring who he was, merely stating, "He'd know him time enough, to his cost;" which was anything but satisfactory information to

so trustworthy a servant as Nickey, who, in the most spirited manner, resisted the clerk, and ultimately obliged him to desist; Nick O'Brady chuckled as he rehearsed these allegations; he should now meet Mr. Fogarty, for the first time since he came to town, not as a suppliant for indulgence, but rather in a position to forgive, than be forgiven; his motives were twofold, and might be combined in what Nick O'Brady found it difficult to unite—business, and pleasure; the former had threatened more than once, since his arrival in town, to interfere considerably with the agreeable companionship of the latter; for now and again, in the theatre and at evening parties, had Mr. Fogarty recognised "Misthur Nick," and the attorney's manner gave no hopes but that he would be dealt with according to law, at the legal man's earliest convenience; still the stiff, constrained bow of his mother's solicitor, on those occasions, did not prevent Nick from stealing a glance of ge-

nuine admiration, at the pretty, *piquante* looking girl that hung on the arm of his legal foe; nor did he fail noticing the suppressed laughter of her mischievous but still sparkling eye, as the coquettish *brunette* glanced from his disconcerted face, to that of her formal, priggish-looking father's, in texture and hue closely resembling the sheets of parchment he delighted to toil amongst.

The morning after Nickey's arrival, with the news of Mr. Davoren being *kilt*, Nickey's master drest with much accuracy, stept, with becoming composure, into the stirrup held by his obsequious lacquey, the aforesaid Nickey, and bestrode, in a very horseman-like style, the well-bred, showy looking animal led forth for his especial use. Like the attendants of Cinderella, Nickey, in the crucible of a *work or die* tailor, had, in one night, been transformed into a smart, well-appointed groom; and, like his master, now sprung on the back of a horse that would not disgrace the stud of a sporting lord.

The equestrians first drew bridle outside a large, handsome-looking house in Rutland Square,

"P. Fogarty, Solicitor," on a well kept, burnished plate of brass, transversely intersecting the upper panel of the hall door, was not required by the rider in advance, to direct his *pull* up. A flashing glance from a well-remembered eye, behind the muslin curtains of the drawing-room window above, was a surer index to Nick O'Brady; and, with a palpitation in the regions of the heart, he aroused the knocker from its repose, and leaving his steed to the care of his groom, was duly admitted into Mr. Fogarty's room of business.

What passed, during that interview, it is not our present business to enquire, we shall merely record the result.

Mr. Fogarty was honoured by a private interview with Lord Denton, and his name appeared as his lordship's solicitor, a few days after, in a morning paper.

In due course of time, Mr. Davoren made his appearance, considerably damaged in appearance, from his late trip to the country, and not in the least prepared for the ungrateful return he was to meet with from his principal, for the prompt and decisive part he had himself taken in the attempted seizure on Mr. Nick O'Brady's goods and chattels, now to meet that gentleman, as "*garcon de maison*," jesting at the expense of his three broken ribs, silencing the clerk's vehement threatening of law proceedings, by accusing him of an actual breach of the peace towards Nickey the Nurse, whilst Mr. Fogarty turned a deaf ear to his confidential man's vindicatory oaths, until, at last, a truce was concluded; the leading article of which, was an oblivious remembrance of the past; and, as Mr. Davoren took his accustomed seat at the office desk, with mind and ribs ill at ease, he felt convinced his master's law was anything but justice. The good man

himself, something between a knave and a dupe; and his friend, 'Misther Nick,' certainly not the better man of the two, while that gentleman, regardless of the clerk's feelings, paid his daily visit in the drawing-room, sedulously bent on making a lasting impression on his young and captivating hostess.

Ellen Fogarty was neither insensible to her admirer's attractions, nor attentions—he was the man, of all others, perhaps, best suited to win the affections of a girl brought up in the very hot-bed of artificial life; yet, like some hardy plant, immured, by an injudicious hand, in the confined air of a conservatory, still retaining its vigour and bloom in so ungenial an atmosphere. In like manner, Ellen preserved her native freshness of feeling, and natural bias of character. Lovers she had in scores, from the night, one of the wealthiest attorneys in Rutland Square flung open his rooms to a gay and brilliant throng, and, for the first time, introduced his only child to a heartless,

calculating world; still Ellen chatted with all—smiled on all—but accepted not one for a suitor. They mistook the studiedly dressed, studiedly taught girl for a mere passive machine in the hands of her vain father. They never dreamed of securing an interest in her affections first; and Ellen was wilfully determined the gift of her heart should precede that of her hand.

Mr. Fogarty interfered not with his daughter in the matter; he valued his own money, as well as her, too highly, to feel displeased with her rejecting so many offers, good and bad as they were; it only increased, in his eyes—and he supposed in that of others—the value of the article in the market, by having so many bidders for the prize; but that it should be knocked down, ultimately, to any one below the mark his ambitious views pointed at, never once occurred to disturb his repose. The girl, that no expense had been spared on, of whom he felt so justly proud—taught to dance by the Master of the Ceremonies

at the Castle—to sing by the leader of the orchestra at Patrick's—to play by the Logier —and ride by the Du Crow—of their day in Dublin—never could disgrace him or herself, by an inferior match. There was something in his mind, even more preventive to such a degradation, in her hereditary rivalship with her cousin next door, over whom she possessed the decided advantage of personal beauty—no despicable weapon to carry on, successfully, a feminine warfare; particularly when the person of her rival was something worse than ugly.

Aileen Disney was deformed—she, too, was an only child; and her father, let it be pretty well understood, that whatever might be Miss Fogarty's fortune, his daughter's should exceed it by five thousand. This left Aileen in no minority of lovers, for the promise or threat of her papa, could fully be carried out. Mr. Disney was a richer man than his next door neighbour, and like him was devotedly attached to his daughter; he and Mr. Fogarty had started in life much

about the same time. Their inextinguishable rivalry, arose out of a boxing match, at school, survived the five years they sat at the same desk together, in the attorney's office, where they served their time, and followed them to the altar, when they wed the daughters of their former master; nay, blazed forth afresh, after both sisters, —heartbroken with their zealous contentions—were consigned to early graves, leaving each a daughter to inherit their mothers' sisterly affection, and deplore their fathers' jealous bickerings. The cousins were inseperable, though from the most trivial article of dress, up to the most expensive and luxurious *bijouterie* of their *toilette*, a spirit was introduced by their fathers, that extended to their children's accomplishments, and amusements, their furniture, and attendants; nay, to the very choice of their poodle dogs. Still both girls were untainted with this emulative feeling of their parents, and continued to look on each other with the same affec-

tionate and sisterly regard, as if it never had existed. Nick O'Brady was well aware of the weak point in Mr. Fogarty's character—vanity in all its moods and tenses, most assailable, perhaps, by a well played off attack on his pompous brother-in-law, whom he considered it both a privilege and delight to mortify. Nick, with much *tactique*, had coquetted with Mr. Disney, respecting the law agency of Lord Denton, which considerably smoothed the way to an understanding with his mother's man of business; to be able, at his own dinner table, in the teeth of his rival, to exhibit the friendly intimacy that existed between himself and this young, extravagant *roué* peer, the admired of the day, was no small triumph; but to be referred to as indisputable authority, for the amount of his lordship's rent roll, the extent of his estates, the family charges thereon, as well as the young lord's own private and public liabilities, was an advantage over another vain man, that literally awed the

petrified heart of the attorney, to extend time to "Misther Nick," to liquidate the enormous debt of arrear and costs, which was more than sufficient at any time to swallow up his whole remaining property; but something more than time Nick began to stand much in need of. Luck *had* turned, and Nick felt he must turn his attention to some other mode of livelihood, before he was engulphed; besides, gambling with him was a necessity, not a passion—how soon it might become so he dreaded not, for another as powerful, but far more pure, had possession of his heart, and he gave himself up unresistingly to its empire. Ellen Fogarty held there an undivided allegiance, and to win her was now the ruling thought of Nick's day dream. How to succeed was the question; but Nick was rich in expedients. Lord Denton was becoming *shy* when the fickle goddess turned her back on Nick; and ere his lordship could take it into his head to do the same, Nick consulted Mr. Fogarty, as to the propriety of

his, Nick's, accepting a lucrative place, which it was more than hinted, was pressed on him by his friend, Lord Denton; requiring on Nick's part, merely a few levee bows, and the discussion of some pleasant dinners, at the table of the Lord Lieutenant. The attorney hemmed, and looked wise; but for once in his life did not act up to his looks, by advancing money to Misther Nick, to carry on, as the gentleman himself expressed it, *the war*, so as to secure, if possible, a commissioner's post. It is true Mr. Fogarty remembered to deduct twenty five per cent from the money advanced, for his risk in the transaction, with bond and mortgage, as security for the remainder. Time flew by, and Lord Denton had never heard of Nick O'Brady's expectation, so could not be expected to know anything about so visionary a matter; and Nick took good care, with much delicacy, to hint to Mr. Fogarty that any allusion to it, before his lordship, would scarcely be well received. This restraint was anything but pleasant to

so vain a man, and Mr. Fogarty soon began to grow fidgetty, and to spend more of his time in his daughter's drawing-room, than Nick quite approved of. In despair, that gentleman had to make love to Aileen Disney, lest his host might suspect him of wooing elsewhere. This last manœuvre of Nick was crowned with signal success. The calculating man of law was soon found looking over the almost interminable catalogue of Nick O'Brady's debts, mortgages, and bonds, with what pleased himself most, his own law costs, and then glanced at the arithmetical tot of all. The cadaverous smile that played round his parchment lips, evinced the purest satisfaction.

"I wish him joy of his bargain," were his secret thoughts, for the cunning of his profession never permitted him uttering them aloud, "he will have to pay my costs, that's certain, as well as all this fellow's debts, and support him and his wife after. Well, that is as it should be; it will let a young fellow live that hasn't a *sous*,

clear off my bill of costs, and bring that pompous old fool to his senses, by draining his purse well for him—and punish him properly too, for expecting a match for his humpy daughter, such as I might reasonably expect for mine."

At that moment, Ellen Fogarty was Lady Denton, in her father's mind's eye, whilst Nick O'Brady, with a very lover-like air, sauntered in the direction of Rutland Square. The servant who admitted him, turned mechanically to the flight of stairs that led to the drawing room, to shew him up; but the gentleman turned into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of Mr. Fogarty. He found the attorney revising, correcting, and underlining sundry sheets of foolscap, well written over, while from time to time, he deigned to enlighten the astute faculties of his head clerk, by initiating him into mysteries "The angels never desire to look into."

There was something so important and bodeful in the countenance of his visitor

that it at once arrested the attention of the observant Attorney. A shrug and an expressive nod towards an inner door, and Mr. Davoren disappeared.

"Something is the matter," said the dried piece of mortality seated on a high stool before a still higher desk, on which his elbow rested.

"Oh, nothing new," returned Nick with a very sentimental sigh, "nothing that you don't know before," and he looked expressively into the stony, bloodless looking eyes of the man of parchments.

"Oh, is that all," returned the Attorney significantly. "If the lady is willing, I do not think there is any great necessity for your looking so *posed* about the matter. Some fuming and fretting, of course; but Kilgroggy is redeemed, my bill of costs satisfied, and your mother and sisters' claims arranged satisfactorily. I really am at a loss to know how a young gentleman, circumstanced as you are, could expect more," he added, looking fixedly in the

apparently puzzled countenance of his listener.

"Oh, nothing, of course," returned Nick with a half-satisfied air, "it is more, I know, than I am entitled to look for; but the hitch is, after I am tied up for life, if her papa chooses to hold his own purse strings, where, upon heaven's earth, are our finances to come from? I needn't tell you what you knew before, that I am many degrees worse than a beggar; for, if everything that's left me in this world, went to the hammer, I'd be head and ears in debt after."

"So much the better," returned his law adviser, with a grimace of pleasure, "you and your debts would supply vent for your pursy, pompous father-in-law's ill-got cash; a capital, a low per centage, to be sure, in the return; but a constant demand for a brisk supply," and the dried, shrivelled-looking mouth of the Attorney made an abortive attempt to laugh. His companion

indulged in a lengthened and most natural one.

"No fear of a dull market for his *ready down*, I promise you," cried Nick, when his laughter subsided, "but the thing is, can he be compelled to yield the supply for a home consumption; unless that were secured first, my risk in the venture would be too great, I confess."

The Attorney squared himself at the desk, with a look of much legal acumen; not a muscle but was jerked into due decorum and subjection; while mechanically taking up a pen that lay on the ink-stand near him, held it poised between his forefinger and thumb, ready to dip and moisten, prepared for the next thought he deemed worthy of being noted down. Nick continued silent.

"In plain English," said Mr. Fogarty, at length, "you must first be certain of the girl's fortune, before you slip your neck into a matrimonial noose."

Nick nodded assentingly, and sat down immediately fronting his companion.

"Her father could give her twenty thousand, if he chose," said the Attorney, sententiously, "but all that sum is not under settlement, I know; though part of it, I am quite certain is, though to what amount, just now escapes my memory."

"A very necessary piece of information, however, to know, before I am *snoosed*," said Nick, drily, with a business-like look into Mr. Fogarty's face.

"Quite right, sir," returned his companion, "nothing more natural, and I shall look over some papers, and let you know, accurately, this evening; nothing so bad as taking a leap in the dark; but you may depend on *my* information on the subject. No fear of your being deceived from the fountain head."

Nick was profuse in acknowledgments, and his friend, with disqualifying "not at all's," abruptly demanded, "How he proposed taking the girl off?" Nick had no

plan arranged, wherewith to give a satisfactory answer ; but Mr. Fogarty seemed to have thought over the subject with the most considerate kindness.

"If your mind is made up, young gentleman, there is no use in dilly dally, about it. You are welcome to my carriage and horses, the first stage ; my coachman won't peach, so no fear of a return postilion blabbing to the old fellow at home, that you took the northern road."

Nick again expressed his grateful thanks, and the little man, with great pomposity, and condescending friendship of manner, stood up, and shook him by the hand, assuring him "that he might depend on a line from him that evening, and that, in the mean time, he had better step up, and see was there any one in the drawing-room."

Nick returned the formal cordiality of his grasp with double interest, and, the next moment, was giving the very *beau ideal* of a lover's knock at the drawing-room door.

That evening, in the same room, its owner slipped a note into the hand of Mr. Nick O'Brady—it ran thus :

"DR. NICK,"

"I have looked over *certain* documents relative to the settlements of a *certain* Attorney, that shall be nameless. I can promise you five thousand with the girl as a certainty, whenever she is Mrs. Nick O'Brady, and might indeed go farther, and promise you fifteen thousand more, when you come back, like naughty children, very bold, and very sorry, and, as a matter of course—by papa to be forgiven."

"Yours faithfully,
"P. FOGARTY."

The letter writer smirked complacently, as the letter reader conned over its contents, at a solitary lamp in a retired part

of the room; he advanced to where he stood as soon as its perusal was finished; but Nick O'Brady met him half way.

"I can never be grateful enough for your kindness, sir," he said, in a voice strangely unnatural from the different emotions, that seemed to actuate the speaker; still joy's intonation was there, and a shade of disappointment clouded the brow of the jealous minded man.

"After all he really likes her," was his secret thought, "and that will be a triumph to the little humpy, and her prig of a father; such a young fellow should only marry her for her money, and torment both of them well for setting up in competition with a beautiful creature, such as Ellen, who can win whatever heart she likes."

"I shall trespass on your kindness to-morrow night," said Nick, hurriedly breaking in on these envious thoughts, "about eleven o'clock I shall want the

carriage, for my mind is made up now, sink or swim I shall take her off from the Castle ball."

A friendly, and impressive slap on the speaker's shoulder, was the approving response of Mr. Fogarty to this resolve, while his daughter ran her fingers rapidly over the keys of the piano, she stood by, and struck up the quaint old air of "Haste to the Wedding," with an arch glance at "Misther Nick," that afflicted him at once with a most inveterate cough, and threatened to suffocate him, with some suppressed and secret emotion. Cousin Aileen, as she determinedly plunged the poker in the already blazing fire, thinking only, no doubt, of increasing the temperature of the already over-heated room.

When Biddy Sweeney and Nickey the Nurse were dismissed by Sir Walter de Burgo, on his errand to Drumgar, the attendant, he had summoned, silently ushered them through interminable passages, at

last conducting them free of the castle, by a private entrance, into a street, at a considerable distance from that by which they first entered. Nickey's volubility returned the moment he found himself in the open air.

"I was bewitched—I was entirely," he cried to his companion, "or I'd never let the day slip over me as I did, an' Misther Nick with so much on his hands ; Biddy *asthore*, the luck doesn't rain, but it pours on you, *avich*, what 'ill you do with all the money! for wan penny 'twill never cost you to go down to Dhrumgar."

Nickey first chuckled, and then laughed outright at his own thoughts.

"Little Sir Walther, or whatever he is, thought, ould Fogarty, was to thrate you to the dhrive, that never lost a sixpence by annybody before. What makes *him* so cureyus about Miss Amy, I wondher," he muttered. "Blow the harm 'twill do, Misther Nick now, anny way; wance his

bread is baked, what 'ill he care if all the sacratory's in the world looked as big, an' as proud as Gildheroy."

Here Biddy reminded him of the journey, and Nickey, winking knowingly, assured her, "He knew well what he was about." Not half satisfied, Biddy trudged after him, with sundry murmurs and entreaties, to be directed to some place, where she could at once set off from to Drumgar. Nickey parried the attack, by whistling occasionally, and repeated promises, "that she should be there time enough," until they arrived within sight of Rutland Square, and then he turned round and faced his companion.

"Biddy Sweeney," he said, impressively, "be said and led by me, an' its snug and comfortable you an' your child 'ill get down to Dhrumgar in plinty ov time; but promise me, by the blessed Cross," and he put the fore-finger of each hand in that form, "that wan word you'll never spake, except to them I give you lave."

Biddy had always looked upon Nickey as a

" dacent, loyal boy," and to suspect him now of treachery, or deceit, was hardly fair—besides, he was from her own part of the country, and the only one in that large city that she could look upon as a friend.

The promise was made, and Nickey desired her watch the house he went into, and when he had been there about five minutes, to give a single knock at the door, but say nothing when it was opened. Biddy did exactly as she was desired, the door was unclosed by Nickey himself, and with a beckon of his hand, he motioned Biddy to follow him ; in utter amazement, the weary, miserable-looking woman stepped on the pile of the luxurious stair-carpet, envying the very dogs of such a house of splendour, and was at length conducted by the self-possessed Nickey into a room of small but exquisitely proportioned dimensions—here was all that could please the eye, or satisfy the most fastidious taste.

" We escaped them finely," said Nickey, in high humour, " not a sarvant in the

house but the cook, that let me in, the men servents all attendin' the ould Buck to Coort, an' the women got lave from their young misthress to go an' stare at um. Oh, *mavrone* Biddy, but 'tis she is the raal jewel ov a lady—not a taste ov pride in her, but able to run round the wisest man that ever broke bread."

And Nickey actually laughed with delight at such transcendent merits. Biddy humbly sat down on a footstool, and looked, with a wordless sorrow in her eyes, at the patiently hungry child in her arms. How much can the offspring of the poor bear of privation, even in the earliest stage of existence! The pampered child of luxury endures not an infringement on its little rights without a signal cry to its attendant nurse for redress; but the inured child of misery gnaws at its tiny fingers, as a substitute for the food its infantine reason tells it is beyond all reach. Biddy's only remaining one, the sole companion of her wants—her sorrows—her hardships—and

her trials—belonged to this class. It was only half the size of an ordinary, well-fed child of the same age ; but it had a thousand times its intelligence—its playful cunning—its wordless knowledge of every face it looked into.—It now but faintly whined for sustenance, its little wail only meant to reach a mother's ear. Nickey, busy as he was with his own pleasurable thoughts, regarded the fair, perished-looking little being with an aspect of pity.

"That poor creathure paid for the Major's doin's, as well as yourself, Biddy, 'tis more like a fairy than a child, with the dint ov hardship."

And the good-natured fellow left the room. Before an hour elapsed, Biddy was sitting in the same room, comfortably clad in a full suit that once belonged to the pretty, arch-looking girl, that cried and laughed by turns, as Biddy, with great *naïvete*, recounted her own and her husband's misfortunes, "all on account of the

Major," with a full description of her visit that day "to Coort," in Biddy's own peculiar style, which nearly convulsed her fair auditor, while her "Faerie boy," sprawled at cousin Aileen's feet, amusing her, and himself, with all the pretty tricks of a young kitten, after lapping up its well-relished ration of new milk.

On this party Nick O'Brady now intruded, and, after a brief whisper of enquiry on his part, and of explanation on that of the fair cousins, introduced to their notice a shabby, genteel-looking man, dressed in rusty black, the popular "*Father Tackem*" of the day in Dublin, "as the gentleman looking for subscribers' names to his new work."

Nickey was then summoned, and whispering to his master "that luck was afore him since he (Nickey) was able to make off, a third witness that might be thrusted," entreated of 'Misther Nick' not to expose him to the ladies; but to say, Biddy was a thirty first cousin ov his

own, at laist, for that same story, got her in ; then carefully bolted the doors of Miss Fogarty's *boudoir*, and drew himself up with a very proud and important look, as his master and future young mistress stood up to be indissolubly united, by the maudlin, besotted-looking being, that now gabbled over, with rapidity, the beautiful and affecting service of matrimony, for the special benefit of this wilful and undutiful pair.

That night, about eleven o'clock, a carriage, with its imperials and caps, drew up in the court-yard of Dublin Castle ; snugly wrapped up in its dickey, sat the attendant valet, and Abigail, both, seemingly, well defended from the cold night air ; while in the arms of the latter, slept soundly as on a bed of down, no poodle dog, but a 'fairy boy,' cradled on his mother's breast.

"May God above us pardon me this night," said Biddy to her companion, in a low voice, "if I sinned this day through ignorance, in lookin' on at what I did ;

an' blot out against me the desate ov bein' here, instead ov far on my way, by this, to Dhrumgar."

"*Whisha*, Biddy *asthore*, let it never lie on ye'er conscience," returned Nickey; "Where was the sin ov lookin' on at a fine young fellah, that had a heart to spend, if he had it, spliced to a darlin' girl, with plinty ov money, down and down, her father's I. O. U. I may say for five thousand, an double that, an' more to the back of it, for the cunnin' ould rogue is fixt, by his own letther, an' never could hould up his head again, if he thried to go back ov id."

"You know best, Nickey," replied Biddy, evidently but half reconciled to the part she was made, by circumstances, to take in the transaction, "but it'sn't here I ought to be, but at the end of my journey by this."

"Whisht, Biddy *achorra*," cried Nickey, in great good humour, "you'll be there time enough, not a coach in Dublin id bring

you sooner, than I'll dhrop you on the cross roads, turning to Kilgroggy; an' then make the best of your way across the fields, as fast as you like, until you get into the plantations ov Dhrumgar. If they see you atsilf, they'll never know you dhrest up in the new shuit."

Mr. Fogarty's carriage had been announced at the vice-regal ball, and Mr. Fogarty himself was the first to hear it, and step across to Nick O'Brady, who was sitting beside Miss Disney, to mention this important piece of information.

"Now is your time, Nick," he whispered "I have asked Lady Banks to set down Ellen, and I shall get into the next room, out of your way; for remember I saw or heard nothing. You ran away with my carriage—a wife—and a fortune at the same time."

The Attorney grinned; he would have laughed, if it were in his nature, and, "Misther Nick" stammered out a repeated "thank you."

Nickey the Nurse held the carriage door widely open; he had to shut it hastily a few seconds after, for in it were safely deposited Nickey's master and Mr. Fogarty's only daughter.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

The next day was one of much excitement though attended with no extraordinary outward manifestation of bustle at Drumgar. The Major's household had been gradually diminishing for some time back; the few servants he now retained were strangers in the country, and strictly prohibited from interfering or remarking anything that did not belong to their own immediate business. The Scotch serjeant, MacDonnell, and three policemen, con-

stantly remained in the house to protect its master in case of any sudden attack, a thing not unlikely, for armed gangs were in the neighbourhood, and men's minds seemed more blood-thirsty than ever, since the late Commission. Still, on this morning, the Major appeared inclined to dispense, at least for that day, with the attendance of the police, yet postponed to give them a final order, to search some suspected houses for arms, in an adjoining district, until the house clock warned for three in the afternoon ; he then dismissed them on this public errand, and paced, in seemingly deep deliberation, his study alone.

" He can't with safety remove her until it is dark," he muttered, " for though she can't be *heard*, according to Dan's plan, she might be *seen* before then."

He took another turn, and his mind seemed to have revolved into another subject.

" There's no pleasing Dan, latterly. I'd see him hanged first before I'd lease him

Knockanure. What a snug sinecure he wants in it ; and no danger either of taking possession now, with the old tenants crossing the water. If this confounded girl were once off with Barney, I did'nt care. If the father blabbed then, Sir Walter is just the man to hang his son."

The Major stopped in his walk, and looked out of the window. The party of police were just issuing from the avenue gate, on the public road.

"This is more of Dan's work," he cried, in a vexatious tone, "he never stopped tormenting me to send them off in such a hurry, whatever his reason was for it ; and now, ten to one but they'll be back before his blackguard of a son takes her off. If this business is bungled, he's only to blame, but I'm the one to suffer," he added bitterly, "for if all this is discovered, I'll have to account to that haughty young Fitzgerald, as well as De Burgo. They're in correspondence too, it seems, and he's authorised by her father. Forsooth I could

have shot him dead when he told me so; but neither fools shall outwit me—they know nothing, and shall know nothing, please the Fates; and then if Barney Maher finishes the matter, who can dispute my title to Drumgar?"

The Major's brow unbent, and his whol countenance and air wore a look of self-satisfied pomposity.

"'Twould be hard now to be circumvented," were his secret thoughts, "every one that opposed me crushed—Mac Carthy hung—Sweeney in a fair way to the same end, for the magistrates' memorial *must* be attended to—the Knockanure gentry dead or transported, and the claimant for Drumgar," the Major laughed horribly, "Barney must account for her. Well, I'm clear of the matter," he said, muttering to himself. "I only desired him to marry her; but Barney is merciful, he'll give her the choice, no doubt, of a sudden, instead of a slow death." Then, with his mind still dwelling on the subject, he continued pacing the room,

and uttering broken sentences. "It's no affair of mine to be sure ; a man must look after his own interests. Barney can't be worse—death will be a release to her. No one ever blamed me, but some disaffected scoundrel, for hanging and transporting those men—the most zealous—active—efficient magistrate—Strong claim on government.—Who did half as much, I'd like to know, in the whole county ?"

These reflections of the Major were broken in on by Sergeant Wetherell.

"She refuses to stir wan inch, sir," he said, composedly, looking in his master's face.

"And you, and your fine bully of a son are such chickens, ye can't compel her," said the Major tauntingly.

"We'd find out the way," returned the Sergeant, demurely, "if your honour id execute the laise, while Barney is here to sign it."

"I told you before," said the Major angrily, "that I'd do no such thing, and

that your only chance of my ever doing so, was Barney's putting her out of the way first."

"Killing her," was the sergeant's reply, in the form of a query, with his eye fixed quietly on his master's.

"I never desired him do that," said the Major hastily, "I only wished him to take her from this, and prevent her ever coming back—to America, or anywhere else; but if she died on the passage, neither he nor I could help it, and neither you or your son have reason to complain. His payment is quite enough without signing away to you the very land I wanted for my own purposes."

The sergeant seemed troubled with a very peculiar kind of cough. The day had been a dark one, even for the gloomy season of the year, and the light now in the apartment approached to dusk. Barney Maher was in it before Major Power was aware, and when he did discover his pre-

sence, the murderer's arms were flung round him with a vice-like grasp.

"Spake wan word, and it's your last," he muttered, between his clenched teeth, then forcing his victim into a chair desired his father, "to at wance prodhuce the laise."

In a moment one was spread, ready drawn and prepared, by the unmoved-looking sergeant, on the table before his pinioned master. The Major would have remonstrated—promised—in fact, done anything but sign it—and gain time by the delay—but Barney Maher was neither to be opposed or trifled with. He held him violently down, with one hand, with the other he presented a loaded pistol at his head. The murderer's oath was not loud, but deep; and Sergeant Wetherell, with great composure, lighted a taper at the fire, and placed it by the side of the lease. The Major signed it.

"We have time enough to witness it

afther," said Dan, "but here's the wax, Major to put your seal on id."

His master groaned, and his coat-of-arms and cipher were duly affixed.

"Now release me," he cried, "and I'll forget all that has passed."

"Your memory used to be a good wan," said the sergeant, sneeringly, "but let that be as it may, we'll first ax you for the kay ov this desk." And he laid his hand on the brass-clasped one before him.

The Major would have expostulated; but the tiger-grasp of Barney was on his throat. The sergeant forced his hand unceremoniously into his master's breeches pocket, and produced the key. The desk was opened, and a letter, received that day from Sir Walter De Burgo, was taken out, and placed on the table, instead of the just executed lease, that was folded up carefully by the sergeant, and placed within a breast pocket of his coat.

A flickering, sneering smile played for a moment on the features of Major Power,

A lease, executed by him, of the lands, in law was void. Dan, with all his cunning treachery then was fairly done.

The contents of the brass-clasped desk seemed old acquaintances of the sergeant's, for he rapidly selected a bundle of papers from amongst them, and holding it up before his master's eyes, for a moment, plunged it with a mocking laugh into the heart of a red-hot fire, that burnt brightly in the grate.

"Dead men, Major, should never tell tales."

And the pun with all its force told on the gentleman addressed, as he watched the brilliant flame of a *dying* declaration, against Barney Maher, blaze before his eyes. He now considered the desperate purpose of Barney and his father were accomplished, and earnestly entreated to be released.

"Soon enough, Major," said his faithful Dan smilingly, "Its relase you want to be sure, an' we'll say ye'erself did it, relased

yourself by cuttin' ye'er throat, at sight ov Sir Walther's letther, axin for his daughter, —won't that be a relase for you, Major; an' a laise for me, whether you change your mind or no."

And the cold-blooded villain produced one of the wretched man's own razors.

"*You* would'nt murder me, Dan," screamed out the now really alarmed Major."

"No, but I'd say yourself did it, Major," said Dan, with the voice of a smooth surface fiend, approaching his victim at the same time.

A tremendous oath from Barney, at his father, "to lave off fooling," dashed him for a moment from executing his fell purpose; and in that brief moment, the heartless husband—the neglectful parent—the false friend—the unjust magistrate, and bad man—had to prepare to meet his God. Brief as it was, conscience-raised spectres were before his glazing eyes, for Barney Maher's murderous hand was on his throat,

—his ruined tenants—the last look of old Jemmy Bourke—the curse of his son—the murdered girl—and her slaughtered lover. The mangled corses of the instruments of his arbitrary will—the dying MacCarthy—and the undeserved ruin of the Sweeneys, —stood before him, in that dread moment, monuments of his public life—his private career—the thought of Amy—of his broken-hearted wife—her death—saw Biddy Sweeney's face at the unclosed windows—heard her cry of terror—and the next, was in eternity.

Two horsemen that day, at a late hour, rode out from the court-yard of Lisfinn. They were accompanied by grooms, not a usual circumstance ; and they were armed men.

"I deserve to lose my daughter," said the elder of the two, in advance of his companion, "when I feel I can prize her as she deserves, for my heartless neglect of her for years. In sorrowing for her sainted mother, I deserted her child ; so true it is, that one engrossing passion in-

dulged in to an access, whether it be base or noble, unfits equally for the duties of active life."

Sir Walter De Burgo sighed, and his companion was silent. After a short pause, he spoke again.

"Strange, that the duties devolved on me, by a name, should first have aroused my torpid mind to a just sense of what I owed my country, and my offspring. Until then, I considered spreading the conquest of England on the Indus was all I owed my native land, and consigning my child to kind friends—a father's best protection. Like the Prodigal, I came to myself in a foreign country, feeding on the husks of a morbid, self-indulged grief. Brute courage, some military skill, or perhaps both, attracted towards me the attention of an influential personage. The old baronetcy of De Burgo, became in abeyance. I was known to be the only heir then living, though in a collateral line. Its revival was pressed on me, and I owed it to the me-

mory of the gallant men who bore it, not to reject the name and honours of my forefathers. In trying to fulfil new duties, I became keenly alive to those I had neglected. Battles in India neither ameliorated nor fostered my poor Irish brethren at home. I accepted a civil situation from the distinguished friend, I before alluded to, and accompanied him to this country to make up for lost time, if possible, in working out remedial measures for my long neglected native land, and restoring my daughter to that place in her father's house, she always held (however unkind my conduct might have appeared to her,) in my heart's best affections since the loss of her incomparable mother.—You know the rest, Mr. Fitzgerald?" he added, after a pause. "How cruelly I was deceived by the wily bad man, who is to reckon with me for his baseness and treachery this day—unless that woman has betrayed me."

Gerald pledged himself for the honest

fidelity of Biddy, at the very moment the gasping woman threw herself almost off a ditch by the road-side, and seized on his horse's rein.

"I knew ye a long way off," she pantingly cried, "an' made across by the short cut to meet you—he's dead by this, if ye don't ride for it—I saw Dan Witherill cuttin' his throat from ear to ear, an' Barney Maher houldin' him down in the chair." Gerald and his companion looked aghast at her frantic words and guestures; but she vehemently went on—"It's the Major, I mane, in his own study—ride, gentlemen *agrah*, or it's too late!" and the exhausted woman let go the bridle she held, and sank down at the side of the road.

Up to the rowels were the riders' spurs plunged in their noble horses' flanks—their grooms rode at topmost speed to overtake them. Still Gerald was the first to reach Drumgar; he made for the back entrance at once; the front, with foul play

going on inside, he guessed would be barred —Sir Walter pressed hard on his rear, and the first thing they saw, as they entered the yard, by the obscure light, was a tax-cart, with its horse ready harnessed, and put to. To dismount, and tell Sir Walter to follow, was the work of a moment ; and, looking around him to discover the back door of the house, he heard suppressed voices.

" I tell ye I heerd horses' feet," came distinctly on his ear. With desperate resolve, he dashed on in the direction, and from the light of a candle, held in the hand of a decrepid old woman, he discovered two men carrying the form of a female closely muffled, violently struggling to escape from their hands. The foremost man Gerald, with one blow, struck to the earth with the butt of the loaded pistol he held in his hand, and grappled with the other—had he been even Gerald's match in strength or activity, with Sir Walter's aid, he must have been overpowered—It was over

in an instant; both men were their prisoners, and the grooms now arrived in time to secure them with the very rope that bound the helpless female they were bearing away. With the hood, that was tied over her head, removed—the gag from her mouth, Amy O'Brien, pale, and almost lifeless, lay on her father's breast—heard him address her, in accents of parental kindness, as his long lost, cruelly neglected child.

And where was her lover?

Gerald's joy was too pure, too sincere to be officious at such a moment—Could he speak? The passive hand that lay within his grasp was raised gently to his lip, and a murmur of thanksgiving was all he uttered.

Sergeant Mac.Donald now arrived with his party in breathless haste, having encountered Biddy on the road, from whom they learned the horrid particulars of what she had just witnessed. Watching, in the shrubbery, the window she had seen Amy

at before, she perceived a light in the Major's study underneath. Cautiously approaching the window, in the hope of discovering something of Amy, she saw Barney Maher holding the Major forcibly in a chair, and Sergeant Wetherell compelling him to sign a paper he put before him; saw the Major sign and seal it; and the Sergeant then put it in his breast-pocket, take a key from his master, and open his desk; take a paper from out of it; hold it up for a moment, and then burn it, all the time looking, as Biddy expressed it, "as mild as new milk," so that she never supposed murder was intended, until the sergeant held the razor at his master's throat—she then screamed, and fled; all this she now hurriedly detailed to the party of police, met accidentally on their way returning back, in her eagerness to send assistance to Sir Walter and Mr. Fitzgerald. The Scotch sergeant at once proposed that the prisoners should be marched direct to the Major's study, the truth of what she as-

serted, ascertained, and their persons searched; to this, Sir Walter acceded, first consigning his daughter to the care of Gerald, and commanded Sergeant Mac Donnell to lead the way. With all the alacrity of a thorough thief-taker, indifferent as to who the criminal might be, so he himself acquired credit for his own prompt exertions, the *canny* Scot stepped forward, first strengthening the party in charge of the well-secured prisoners, by an additional policeman, while the third man under his command, he dispatched as a sort of a *vidette,* to discover if there were any accomplices in the house. His old *confrere,* Sergeant Wetherell, with whom he had lived up to that moment on the most friendly terms, regarded these operations of the well-disciplined policeman much in the same spirit, the Irishman, supposed to be roasted by his own fellow-countryman turning the spit, would have appreciated the officious attentions of his unnatural cook. With the prod of a

police bayonet, however, he was made to move on, while Barney not yet quite recovered from the stunning effects of Gerald's timely blow, doggedly followed; a sturdy groom and watchful policeman at either side of the fettered culprits.

In this order, they reached the Major's study, where the appalling spectacle of its owner, welling in his own blood, was the first horrific object to meet their eyes.

The taper still burnt on the table; the open letter lay beside it; the discoloured razor was on the ground. Familiar objects were around; but he who had plotted, planned, executed deeds of darkness in their presence, was never more to look on them again. His bleeding, lifeless carcase lay passive and impotent in his own arm chair; his terror-stricken features distorted, in his last and deadly struggle to escape the searching eye of his Maker—the lash of his own conscience in eternity. Biddy Sweeney stood in that room; she had once visited it before; then,

"the Militia Major" sinned with a high hand surrounded by what he deemed his military and civil trophies; carrying out against a helpless victim, the iniquitous decrees of his own unrighteous will; now, that helpless one was to prove the only avenger of his cold-blooded murder—the instrument in the hand of an inscrutable Providence, to rid the land of the base and vile whom he trained, fostered, nourished to annihilate himself.

* * * *

The local papers of the day contained a very affecting and melancholy account "of the awful and barbarous murder of Joseph Power, Esq., of Drumgar, with a long and touching eulogy on the public and private virtues of so efficient, zealous, and active a Magistrate, cutoff at the very time the country required his services most; and that by his own servant, and his son; the former

having lived with him for many years, increasing, if possible, the atrocity of his crime, by so long daily witnessing the many amiable qualities that so eminently distinguished his humane and benevolent master."

The same papers recorded, the following spring, "the execution of Daniel Wetherall and Barney Maher, for the murder of the late Joseph Power, Esq., of Drumgar," and described both culprits as impenitent to the last; offering before, and on their trial, to turn crown evidence against each other; either scarcely restrained on the gallows from reviling his fellow-sufferer; when an old and decrepid-looking woman burst through the crowd, to curse the elder ruffian of the two. It was attempted to remove her; but, before this could be accomplished, she expired on the spot, in a state of delirium.

The Bath Gazette, dated the ensuing autumn, contained the following paragraph,

under that interesting head, "Marriages in High Life."

"At Bath, on the 13th instant, by special license, Gerald Fitzgerald, Esq, grandson and heir apparent to Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, Lisfinn Castle, Ireland, to Amy, only daughter of Sir Walter de Burgo, of De Burgo Park, Limerick, and Drumgar House, Tipperary. At the same time, Charles Saville, Esq., late Colonel of His Majesty's 5—th regiment, of Saville Court Sussex, to Agnes, only daughter of the late Major Power of Drumgar."

Ubiquitous as is the information of a modern Newspaper, still none of them were aware, or forgot, perhaps, in the multiplicity of news, foreign and domestic, to announce a piece of intelligence we cannot deny our gentle readers; that, when the gates of Lisfinn were flung open to receive its future young lord and his noble bride, Biddy Sweeney held one side of the divided portal firmly open; her husband stood similarly occupied at the other; their "faerie boy"

rolled in glorious play on the smooth, green sod, that sloped from their now happy home —the ivy-crowned gothic, turretted lodge of the principal entrance to Lisfinn Castle— Bonfires blazed around; but the brightest and most enduring amongst them was fed by the hand of women on the bawn of Paddy Dooly's house at Knockanure. Why not? Their future landlord and his bride were come to live among them ; their present had given an earnest of his good intentions towards them; their husbands sons and brothers were expected, that night, from the hulks.

THE END.

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